



**INVESTIGATING CLASSROOM DYNAMICS IN JAPANESE UNIVERSITY EFL
CLASSROOMS**

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Abstract

Since 1868 to the present day, the Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Culture (MEXT) has implemented many reforms to enhance English education in Japanese universities. However, much still remains to be done to improve the situation and one of the biggest hurdles is the fact that there are many unmotivated students in Japanese university EFL classrooms. This thesis explores the reasons for this problem by focusing on inter- and intra-relations between teachers and students in this context. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews and questionnaires. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and uses space and methodological triangulation in order to overcome parochialism. My conclusions are that: 1) Visible and invisible inter-member relations exist between members of university classes and their teachers; 2) The teacher's behaviour affects the students' behaviour and impacts on their learning; and 3) Cooperative learning has a positive influence on language acquisition; 4) Japanese university students may not perceive how little interaction they have with their teacher; 5) Students exhibit gender differences in terms of the types of problems encountered and the ways in which they deal with them, but some problems are dealt with negatively by female and male students alike; and 6) Teachers appear not to perceive the problems and when they do they often deal with them by using negative strategies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND THE JAPANESE EDUCATION SYSTEM

1.1 Introduction

To introduce this study, I look first at the historical development of foreign language education in Japan from the Meiji period (1868-1912) to the present day. Receiving education used to be the exclusive privilege of a *Samurai's* sons and his superiors. Farmers, artisans, merchants, and women were neglected. However, since 1871 in the Meiji period when the Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Culture (MEXT) issued the Fundamental Code of Education (*gakusei*), it has been the right of all children to receive compulsory education for 9 years. The Ministry's policies have not, however, brought much improvement yet in EFL and the Ministry is still looking for suitable ways to enhance it for the 21st century so as to lead all other nations. MEXT has in the past borrowed many approaches and methodologies from Western countries, in order to catch up with them, but the results to date have not been impressive. Students in thirty one Asian countries took the CBT TOEFL test in 2007. According to TOEFL totals, the Japanese who took the CBT TOEFL test of students in Asia in 2007 were third from bottom. It is time for MEXT to consider what is happening in Japanese classrooms, and to focus in particular on the interaction of teacher with student and student with student. It is only by adopting this microscopic, ethnographic approach that we can hope to identify the problems that we face 'at the chalkboard', and to begin to identify possible ways of improving matters.

1.2 Background of the problem

From the Meiji period, 1868-1912, until the present day, MEXT has devised various reforms to enhance Japan's English education, but these educational policies have met with varying degrees of success, and the overall improvement has been negligible. While the universities are centres of advanced knowledge and in-depth research in academic disciplines, today's English teachers often have to teach students who have very low English abilities, partly because of the decline in the student population and the shortage of funding. Moreover, people speak sarcastically about Japanese universities as "leisure lands" because students at this level tend not to study hard, but to enjoy their hobbies and social activities as undergraduates.

MEXT has borrowed teaching methodologies and approaches from Western countries, mainly Britain, Australia and North America, but very little research has been conducted into: 1) what happens in classrooms when Western approaches are adopted in Japan; and 2) how culture affects the learning of a foreign language over a very long period. It is important to consider these points, because it is unlikely that borrowed methodologies will fit seamlessly into the Japanese educational system. Investigation into what is going on in Japanese EFL classrooms is one of the aims of the present study. In particular, I aim to find out about the relationships of teacher-student and student-student in Japanese EFL classrooms, which at present may even be so problematic as to hinder the learning of English. Assessing the appropriateness of both the borrowed and homegrown methodologies used with Japanese learners of English is one of my main aims.

In order to fully understand the complexities of the Japanese education system, it is necessary

to take a historical perspective. In the following sections, I discuss the development of the country's educational history and its problems with teaching and learning English.

1.3 English language education in Japan: a history

1.3.1 From the Meiji period to the pre-war period

The first Minister of Education, Arinori Mori, appointed in 1885, planned the education system. He made a clear distinction between academic study (*gakumon*) and education (*kyoiku*) because he believed that the two were qualitatively different. He argued that those who were to become leaders of the country should pursue academic study at imperial universities, and others should have education (*kyoiku*). In 1882, Shigenobu Okuma founded the Tokyo Senmongakko (Waseda University), while Yukichi Fukuzawa founded Keio Gijuku (Keio University) in 1885 and Tokyo University in 1886. Mori's nationalist school system was completed by the 1890 Imperial Prescript on Education.

The English language education system was implemented in schools by the Ministry of Education from the Meiji period; Koike and Tanaka (1995) say that this was instituted to catch up with the advanced civilization of the Western world and modernize the nation (p. 16). Shimahara (1979) also argues:

Meanwhile, the Meiji leaders confronted problems that were both external and internal. National integration itself was at stake, and the leaders believed that nation building could best be accomplished by establishing a comprehensive national educational system that would provide the young with cognitive and motivational orientations for national unity (p. 47).

According to Shimahara et al. (1992), schooling proved a formidable tool throughout the nation's early modernization and the leaders of the Meiji period used it skillfully. In the

early Meiji period about 170 foreign specialists were invited to the country as teachers. One of them was H. E. Palmer, a lecturer at the University of London, who in 1922 was invited as Linguistic Adviser to the Ministry of Education. His four recommendations were: 1) More emphasis on oral comprehension and speaking rather than reading and writing; 2) Teaching materials based on students' interests; 3) Class sizes of less than thirty; 4) An ideal number of six English class hours per week (Koide and Tanaka, 1995, p, 17). However, the intervention of World War II and the Pacific War prevented the implementation of these until the post-war period. Koike and Tanaka describe what happened to English education then:

During the War, English was completely dropped from the girls' middle-school curriculum, and the program was reduced to four hours per week in boys' middle-schools. English was regarded as the enemy's language and the learners as spies against the nation. English language teaching was almost dead. However, it is interesting to note that the Naval Academy taught English to the students, as if to prepare them for reconstruction of a new Japan (p. 17).

1.3.2. The post-war period

After the war, America occupied Japan, and Japan experienced significant school reforms. The Japanese government wanted to recover from the social chaos evidenced, for example, by the many homeless orphans, and therefore in 1945 a new education policy was issued to help construct a 'peaceful nation'. By the end of 1945, the General Headquarters of the occupation forces (GHQ) ordered the removal of militarist and nationalist ideology from the curriculum and textbooks. Up to 1946, the education system in Japan had continued the work of the Education Order of 1872. The 1947 Education Law, however, set out a 6-3-3-4-year coeducational system under the influence of the USA, based on the principle of equal educational opportunity.

All people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided for by law. All people shall be obliged to have [=ensure that] all boys and girls under their protection receive ordinary education as provided for by law. Such compulsory education shall be free (Constitution of Japan, Article 26 that is taken directly from the MEXT website, in English, Retrieved on August 2, 2008 from www.mext.go.jp).

This system, which is still in place, entitles students to go to primary school for six years, then to go on to junior high school for three years and senior high school for a further three years, ending with four years at university. Compulsory education for students covers the six year primary school and three of junior high school. According to Shimahara (1979), six reforms were initiated by the U.S.; 1) in the aims and content of Japanese education; 2) in language teaching; 3) in the administration of education at the primary and secondary levels; 4) in teaching and the education of teachers; 5) in adult education, and 6) in higher education (p. 63). The mission recommended that the traditional teaching methods, which emphasized memorization and “a vertical system of duties and loyalties,” should be changed in order to foster independent thinking, the development of personality and democratic citizenship (p. 64). Shimahara emphasizes that these reforms introduced the concept of individuality into the curriculum, saying:

A curriculum, the mission suggested, should consist not only of an accepted body of knowledge but also take into account the physical and mental activities of pupils and their differing abilities and social factors (p. 64).

In 1947, national educational guidelines in EFL were issued under the influence of Harold E. Palmer’s Oral Method.

1.3.3 From 1950 to the present

During the 1950s and the 1960s, in line with countries in the West, the audio-lingual approach was widespread in language classes in Japanese junior high schools. However, Koike and Tanaka (1995) describe teachers and students at senior high schools as not receptive to the new methods. This was because the university entrance examinations still put their main emphasis on reading, translation, grammar and composition, neglecting listening and speaking (p. 18).

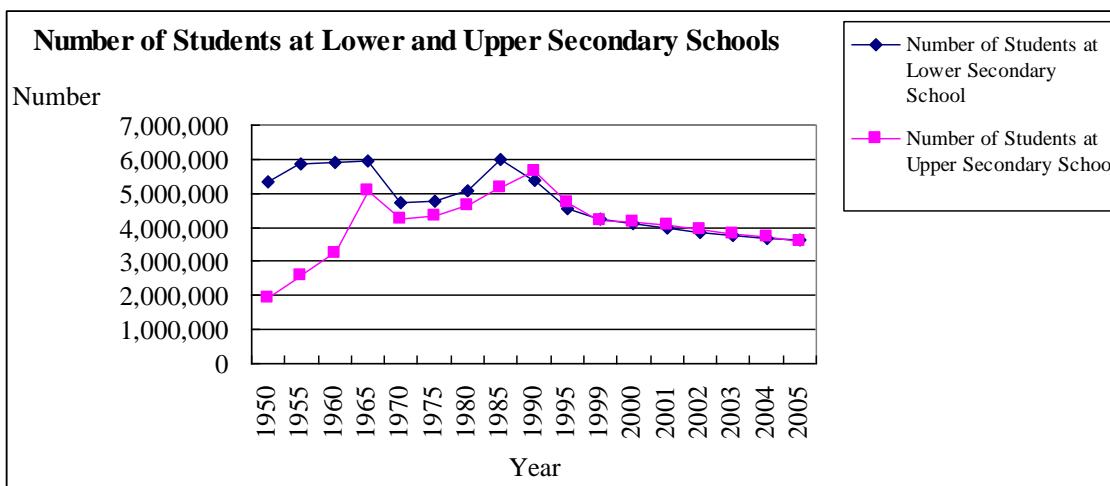
In 1960, the Ministry of Education established the Council for Improvement of English Teaching, to review the direction of English language teaching in Japan. It emphasized language activities which used all the four skills of language. In the findings of this review, the university entrance examinations were criticized for the first time. It emphasized language activities which used all the four skills of language. In the findings of this review, the university entrance examinations, which are not under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (except for the Centre Exam, a preliminary screening exam taken by applicants aspiring to public universities and high-ranked private universities) (Gorsuch, 2000, p. 681) were criticized for the first time. Not only did high schools find it hard to prepare students for them, since it was not clear what they were testing, but the university English-teaching staff also found them unsatisfactory, since they did not seem to test language proficiency as such. Hence the English language proficiency of the students who passed them and enrolled at university was not consistent.

In 1975, the Council made four recommendations: 1) the introduction of one month's intensive in-service training for leading English teachers; 2) the introduction of two months'

overseas training of selected English teachers; 3) the installation of specialized English courses or programmes in senior high schools; 4) the establishment and expansion of specialized English courses or programmes in senior high schools. However, in spite of these proposals, the situation of English language education in Japan has remained static, without much improvement. Since 1947, the Ministry of Education has implemented many reforms to enhance English education (Table 1.1), though they are still looking for better methods.

Graph 1.1 shows the number of students at Lower and Upper secondary schools from 1950 to 2005. It is apparent that the number of students has fallen every year from 1990 till 2005. This is beginning to cause significant competition among universities and colleges, each of which seeks to obtain as many students as possible. Universities and colleges are the institutions which face the biggest problems these days. As shown in the report from the Foreign Press Center (2001, pp. 19-27), Japan, like other countries, has problems in its schools, such as bullying, violence, chronic truancy and high school dropout rates. Graph 1.1 shows the decline in the population of 18-year-olds; the number of university applicants will soon equal the number of places available, bringing in the age of “universal college admission” for motivated and unmotivated students alike (Foreign Press Center, 2001, pp. 19-27). This means that we can expect higher numbers of demotivated students to enter Japanese university EFL classrooms in the near future. One of the measures taken by MEXT is to solve these problems by improving the quality of teachers (Foreign Press Center, 2001, p. 26).

Graph 1.1 The number of students at Lower and Upper secondary schools



(Source: www.mext.go.jp/english/statis/index.04.htm and [index.05.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/english/statis/index.05.htm), accessed on June 13, 2008)

Table 1.1 presents a brief outline of the history of innovations from the post-war period to 2004. In 2008, MEXT will evaluate the policy, ‘An Action Plan to Cultivate “Japanese with English Abilities”, but it has not yet published any analysis or data of its Action Plan.

Table 1.1 A brief history of the innovations from the post-war period to 2004

Year	Events
1947	Recommendations for emphasis on oral comprehension and speaking 1) Teaching materials based on students' interests 2) Class sizes of less than 30 3) Six English classes per week
1950s	Audio-Lingual approach Senior high school teachers and students did not welcome the new method, as Japanese English teaching was so conditioned by the university entrance examination system
1960s	Council for Improvement of English Teaching Recommendations for emphasis on language activities in terms of the four language skills, use of textbooks written in modern English, audio-lingual aids, and sentence practice; and for the enhancement of the teacher-training curriculum for university students
1975	Further recommendations Further recommendations were for 1) One month's intensive in-service training for leading English teachers 2) Two months' overseas training of selected English teachers 3) Installing language laboratories in senior high schools across the nation

	4) Expansion and establishment of specialised English courses or programmes in senior high schools
1978	<p>Reduction of English class hours</p> <p>Three hours per week at the junior-school level to give some free time to students and teachers</p>
1984	<p>The Provisional Council on Education Reform</p> <p>Asked by the Nakasone Cabinet to review the post-war system and to draft plans for a third reform of education, the Provisional Council made two recommendations: 1) creating an education system which valued individuality and individual abilities; 2) promoting at all levels of society a lifelong learning system according to ability and interest</p>
1985	The Japan Exchange and Teaching Program was launched
1987	<p>National Syllabus</p> <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To carry out the transition to a lifelong learning system; 2) To put more emphasis on the importance of individuality; 3) To enable Japanese educational systems and practices to cope with contemporary changes <p>As far as the secondary schools are concerned, international communication should be the ultimate goal, with much emphasis on the four skills of language, and four elective class hours per week in junior high schools should be permitted. The course was called Aural/Oral Communication</p>
1991	<p>University Council on Education Reform</p> <p>This was the first major revision since the new university system was inaugurated just after WWII. College and universities determined their own requirements regarding courses and credits</p>
1992	<p>The Council of Study for Senior High School</p> <p>To promote the development of students' communicative skills</p> <p>Early childhood English education started</p> <p>Experimentation in two public primary schools in Osaka</p>
1993	<p>Early childhood English education</p> <p>Experimentation in two public primary schools in other prefectures</p>
1994	<p>Early childhood English education</p> <p>The addition of twelve more schools officially announced, with three consecutive years of experimentation</p> <p>Revision of the Course of Study for English</p> <p>To develop students' communicative competence</p>
1997	<p>Programme for Education Reform</p> <p>Emphasizing respect for various cultures and different values, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme ('JET Program') was set up, in which young native speakers were invited to Japan to take part in language and club activities.</p> <p>In order to develop proficiency in English, various types of in-service training were introduced.</p>

	<p>English teaching was to be conducted both in Japan and overseas, including training using communication satellites, to help teachers obtain practical teaching skills.</p> <p>Improvement of English education at universities: the entrance examination was to be improved by the inclusion of listening proficiency and the development of proficiency in other skills. Monbusho (the precursor of MEXT) would examine the possibility that high grades in TOEIC and TOEFL could be regarded as university credits.</p> <p>Enhancement of teachers' international experience and international contribution</p>
1998	<p>National Curriculum Standards Reform</p> <p>To develop practical communicative competence in the target language, great emphasis was to be put on practising the sort of situation where the target language was actually used. Listening and speaking practice would be particularly emphasized in lower secondary schools.</p> <p>Upper secondary schools would offer two options in English for students to choose from. One was "Oral Aural Communication I," providing mainly oral communication practice, and the other was "English I" providing comprehensive communication activities. In addition, teaching foreign languages other than English would be further promoted. Improvement of teaching methods was begun, offering individualized instruction with much attention to each child's interests, understanding of class content and level of achievement. The adoption of such cooperative teaching strategies as team teaching and teaching by the united efforts of teachers of different specialties was recommended.</p>
2002	<p>Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Structural Reform 2002</p> <p>These policies were meant to boost the motivation of learners and promote contact with foreigners and overseas study among high school students and university students. It was also intended to improve individual university entrance examinations and improve educational content, introducing a listening test and making other improvements; integration of the 4 skills of language, emphasizing basic practical communication abilities; setting up Super English High Schools; and promoting the new Course of Study, which targeted the comprehensive integration of the 4 skills.</p> <p>Improving the qualifications of English instructors and upgrading the teaching system was also proposed by the placement of ALTs and their effective development under the JET programme.</p> <p>The language abilities of English teachers had to be equivalent to STEP semi-first level, with a TOEFL score of 550 points and a TOEIC score of 730 points</p>
2003	<p>An Action Plan to Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To familiarize students with listening to English and to enable them to understand the speaker's intentions, etc. in simple English 2) To familiarize students with speaking in English and to enable them to speak about their thoughts, etc. in simple English

	<p>3) To familiarize students with reading in English and to enable them to understand the writer's intentions, etc. in simple English</p> <p>4) To accustom and familiarize students with writing in English and to enable them to write about their thoughts, etc. in simple English.</p> <p>Almost all English teachers were to acquire English skills (with STEP pre-first level and scores of TOEFL 550 and TOEIC 730 or over) and teachers were to be able to train classes in communication abilities through the repetition of activities making use of English</p>
2004	<p>A new initiative “Japan! Rise again!”</p> <p>This included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education” to promote reform in the very basics of education b. Specific measures for the “Improvement of Academic Ability,” including thoroughgoing lesson improvements and programmes to improve reading comprehension skills in promoting the “Action Plan for Improving Academic Ability” c. “Professional Development of Teachers” through the establishment of professional graduate schools for teacher training, and the renewing of the teaching licence system d. Reform of schools and boards of education, to give them initiatory powers.
2008	MEXT has not yet published the analysis of its Action Plan.

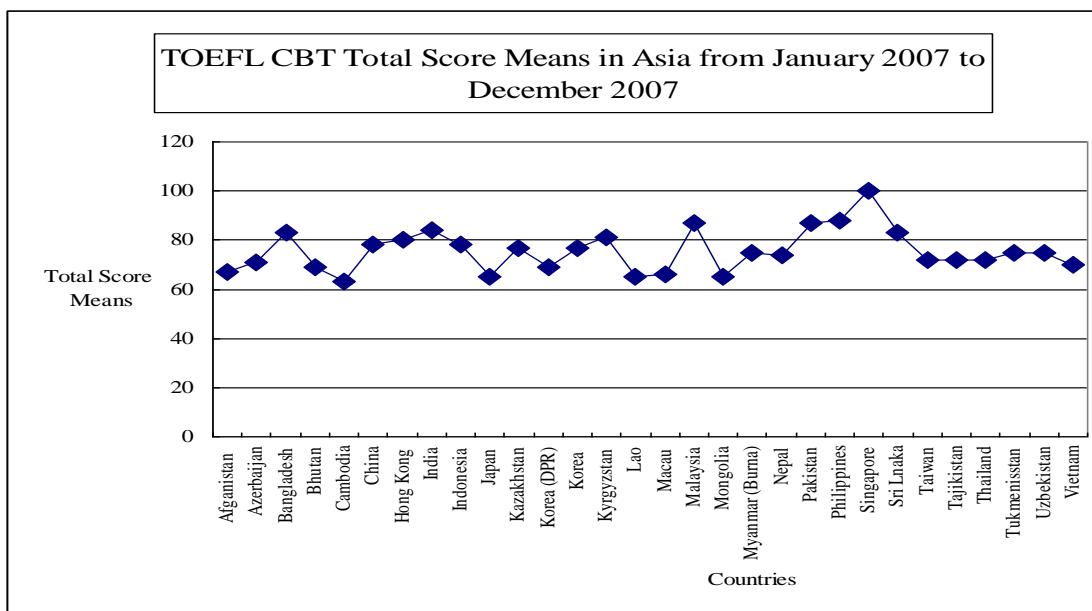
Japan has still not fulfilled the three recommendations of 1947; to make matters worse, in 1978 English class hours were reduced from 6 to 3 hours per week. This seems to be one reason why Japanese students cannot speak English: they have too little time to learn or practise the language. As regards class size, those in charge of administration at universities and colleges offer large classes (mass education), instead of small groups in small rooms (lower and upper secondary schools have long had more than 30 students in a class). These days, some English teachers tend to use teaching materials based on students' interests. However, if an English teacher has more than 30 students, it is difficult to satisfy everyone. It is not easy to see why the three recommendations of 1947 are still not observed in today's classes, but Japanese English education changes very slowly.

In the 1950s, as we have seen, senior high school teachers and students did not welcome the new methods, since they were unrelated to the university entrance requirements. Finally, however, in 2006, a listening test in the entrance examination was introduced by the National Centre for University Entrance Examinations. This trend in testing is expected to have a wash-back effect, encouraging teachers to teach listening in the classroom and concentrate less on reading and writing; it will thus motivate students to improve their listening comprehension, so long ignored in schools.

In 2002, MEXT, for the first time, clearly stipulated the teaching qualifications for teachers. All English teachers must have TOEFL 550 points, TOEIC 730 points or over and STEP pre-first level. They have not as yet (2006) announced the result of the reform of 2002 or published their data, but will wait until 2008.

Even with the present educational reforms, as noted above, the English language ability of Japanese speakers came third from last in the CBT TOEFL tests of students in Asia. Graph 1.2 shows the means of all scores between January 2007 and December 2007. This TOEFL test has 4 sections: reading, listening, speaking and writing, the maximum score being 120 points.

Graph 1.2 Means of Scores in Computer-based Tests in Asia



(Retrieved on June 13, 2008 from www.toefl.ets.org/toefl)

We can use this graph to compare the scores of the Japanese students with others in Asia; in spite of the reforms and investment of money and time, Japanese students still lag behind many. The latest initiative from MEXT is the Education Plan for the 21st century, “The Rainbow Plan”, based on the recommendation of “The Final Report of the National Commission on Education Reform.” But despite its eclecticism, it has never formally considered the following matters: 1) what happens in the classrooms; 2) the way in which the culture affects the learning of languages; 3) what Japan’s society expects of education; 4) the co-operation of the government, the business world and schools to enhance English language learning. This thesis will to a varying extent explore these issues. With the declining population of adolescents every year, universities and colleges now allow virtually all applicants to pass the entrance examinations, able and unable, willing and unwilling. When it is so hard for many students themselves to keep motivated, it is increasingly hard for English teachers to teach them.

One of the typical innovations to improve Japanese students' English abilities is the hiring of young native speakers of English just after their first degree. This programme is called JET (the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) and MEXT promotes international exchanges at the local level, expecting it to enhance Japan's language teaching. The purposes of the programme, according to the government website are as follows:

... to help enhance internationalization in Japan, by promoting mutual understanding between Japan and other nations ... to improve foreign language education in Japan and to encourage international exchange at the local level by fostering ties between Japanese youth and foreign youth. The objectives of the programme are being achieved by offering JET Programme participants ... the opportunity to serve in local authorities as well as public and private junior and senior high schools

(Retrieved on June 19, 2008 from

<http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JETProgram/homepage.html>.

Since 1987, the number of JET participants has increased dramatically, reaching 5,119 in 2007. JET offers three positions: 1) Assistant Language Teacher (ALT), engaged in language instruction and employed by local boards of education or public junior and senior high schools; 2) Coordinator for International Relations (CIR), engaged in internationalization activities and employed by offices of local authorities or related organizations; and 3) Sports Exchange Advisor (SEA), promoting international exchange activities through certain designated sports.

The nine duties of ALTs are: 1) Assistance with classes taught by Japanese Teachers of English in junior and senior high schools; 2) Assistance in English education, usually conversation training, at primary/elementary schools; 3) Assistance in preparing supplementary materials for teaching English; 4) Assistance in the language training of Japanese Teachers of English; 5) Assistance in the instruction of English language clubs; 6)

Provision of information on language and other related subjects for such people as Teachers' Consultants and Japanese Teachers of English; 7) Assistance in English language speech contests; 8) Participation in local international exchange activities; 9) Other duties as specified by the contracting organization. For these purposes, ALTs need only a first degree in Education or English. This is a big disadvantage for English education, because these new graduates tend to have little experience of teaching. Even those who assist Japanese English teachers in the classrooms (through Team Teaching), or outside the classrooms, should preferably have a teaching or specialist qualification.

The JET programme has been criticized because the ALTs are sometimes used as "living tape-recorders"; Japanese English teachers try to avoid teaching with them because the standard of English among the Japanese teachers is inferior. McVeigh (2002, p. 168) has a very interesting list of the qualities which Japanese learners of the language associate with two different 'ideals' of English: 'Japan-appropriate English' and "'fantasy English'. Table 1.2 contrasts these two ideals:

Table 1.2 Japan-appropriate English and Fantasy English Compared

Japan-appropriate English	Fantasy English
Purpose	Purpose
<i>Eigo</i> : To pass exams In-group language Memorization training Passing tests in Japan Being a good student Associated Learning Practice Cramming Grammar-translation (<i>yakudoku</i>) Studying Reading/writing	<i>Eikaiwa</i> : For communication Out-group language Interaction with the foreign Other Vacations/travel in foreign lands Becoming "Internationalized" "native" English Associated Learning Practice Learning Communicative approach Conversation Speaking/listening

<p>Classrooms and cram schools Japanized (or katakana-ized) English</p> <p>Associated Meanings</p> <p>Teachers/authority figures Japaneseness Japan Japanese culture “Traditional” Japanese culture Past</p> <p>Tensions of exam preparation Control Hierarchy Politeness</p> <p>Circumlocution/indirectness Self-monitoring Conformity</p>	<p>Commercial English schools Using</p> <p>Associated Meanings</p> <p>Gaijin/playful Other “Internationalism” Other countries Foreign culture “Modern” foreign culture Modernity</p> <p>Relaxation of overseas travel Freedom Equality Frankness</p> <p>Straightforward/directness Expressing oneself Independence</p>
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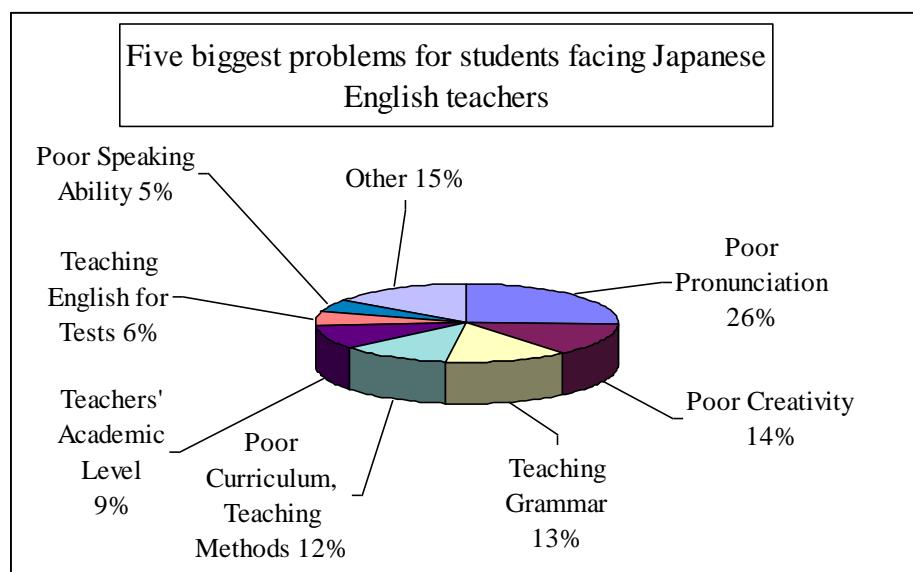
This comparison interestingly suggests that Japanese learners of English evaluate foreign teachers as not being serious. Hiring young native speakers without adequate teaching experience may be the reason for their doing so. MEXT must consider the conditions of the JET Programme if they genuinely want to improve the skills of Japanese learners of English. Conversation classes at universities and colleges tend to be more relaxed than other English classes, and some students feel that such classes are disappointingly trivial in content. Other students, conversely, want to attend easier classes so as to get credits without effort.

In 1997, MEXT decided to provide English in-service training in order to give teachers international experience, make an international contribution and obtain practical teaching skills. Some Japanese English teachers have poor pronunciation and cannot communicate with native-speaker English teachers who speak only English. At the same time, though English teachers should logically be good models for Japanese students, they do not always

have good communication skills.

Japanese learners of English do not always respect Japanese English teachers, especially if they have poor pronunciation or do not communicate easily with the ALTs in class. Graph 1.3 shows the types of problem that Japanese students have with Japanese English teachers in the classroom (Matsumoto, 2003, p. 34).

Graph 1.3 The five biggest problems for students facing Japanese English teachers



Globalisation influences the teaching of English in the classroom and MEXT realizes the importance of increasing the level of understanding in communication with people of other countries. Internationalization also impacts on Japanese people, who themselves realize the importance of understanding people with different values from other cultures. English has become the international language and internationalization has produced the following assumptions in foreign language education: 1) the 'foreign language to learn is English; 2) the model for 'English' should be standard North American or British varieties; 3) learning English leads to international/intercultural understanding; 4) national identity is fostered

through learning English (Kubota, 2002, p. 19).

1.4 Summary

MEXT has tried to improve for the 21st century the English skills of Japanese learners of English, as well as the teaching methods and abilities, because English proficiency is a vital element in linking Japan with the rest of the world. However, the skills of Japanese students have not much improved. MEXT has borrowed many teaching methodologies and approaches from Western countries, but applied them without doing classroom research in Japan. This has resulted in minor changes to English language teaching, instead of radical reforms costing a substantial sum. It is time for MEXT to end its excessive reliance on these borrowed methodologies and approaches, and to consider Japanese classroom dynamics more carefully. As Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) emphasize, the learning process is interrupted when those in charge fail to understand that dysfunctional classroom interactions between teachers and students and between students can divert energy and attention away from the learning task (p. 2).

The next chapter of this thesis will discuss the issue of classroom dynamics.

CHAPTER TWO

GROUP DYNAMICS IN THE JAPANESE UNIVERSITY ELT CLASSROOM

2.1 Introduction

Though MEXT has borrowed various teaching methodologies and approaches from Western countries, its expectations of the English skills of Japanese students seem not to have been met. Despite these problems, very little research has been conducted in Japan into what happens in the classroom and how culture affects the learning of English. There is therefore an urgent need to investigate these in order to improve matters. As Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) believe,

...the learning process often is considerably hindered by a lack of understanding of how dysfunctional classroom interaction between teachers and students, and interpersonal and group dynamics affect current approaches to teaching second languages in particular (p. 2).

In this chapter I look at the issue of group dynamics in the classroom with a view to relating the theories of writers in the field to the problems faced by Japan in this area. I begin by looking at the problems in today's Japanese universities, and then go on to see how linguistic globalization has influenced the teaching and learning of English and the way in which the communicative approach has been brought to language teaching. I then go on to argue that issues to do with group formation lie at the core of some of the problems faced in Japanese university EFL classrooms. Having made this case, I analyse theories of group dynamics in general and relate this theory to the Japanese context, focusing in particular on the impact on classroom dynamics of the teacher, the students and gender issues. Finally, I propose

cooperative learning as a possible solution to some of the problems and discuss how it might be implemented in Japan.

2.2 Problems in Japanese universities

Given Japanese students' poor performance in university English classes and the difficulties often faced when teaching unresponsive groups, teachers sometimes tend to spoon-feed their students. The students, in turn, often take a passive rather than an active role in the learning process, and merely want to memorize as much as possible.

They [Japanese students] learn to listen well and to think quickly, but not to express their ideas. Neither speaking nor writing is encouraged. Speculation, controversy and interpretive relativism do not enter the classroom. Thought is weighted in favour of memory and objective problem solving with little official curricular interest in creativity of a humanistic or artistic kind (Rohlen 1983, p. 316).

Lenient assessment in Japanese higher education is widespread, allowing students to pass their exams without much study and to get credits without attending classes (Nemoto, 1999, p. 201). Students seem unaware of, or indifferent to, the fact that classroom interaction between them and their teachers is often dysfunctional, leading to a disrupted learning process. It may therefore be helpful to investigate what this interaction involves at present.

As noted in Chapter One, the age of 'universal college admission' will come soon and more unmotivated or low-language-ability students, who will be difficult to teach, will enroll at universities. At school, the violence, bullying and chronic truancy and high school dropout rates will increase. According to "Education in Japan" (The Foreign Press Center, 2001), in FY (the financial year, starting in April) 1999, 31,055 violent incidents occurred at a total of 5,895 schools. In the same year, the number of regular truants from public and private

elementary and middle schools was 130,208. The reasons for this chronic truancy were “anxiety or other emotional confusion,” “multiple factors,” and “apathy.” These conditions appear to require teachers to learn new skills to manage their diverse classrooms and raise following research questions, which this thesis will address:

A) The main theoretical research questions

- 1) What kind of visible and invisible inter-member relations exist between Japanese university students in the language classroom and how do they affect their learning?
- 2) How does the teacher’s behaviour affect the students’ behaviour, and what impact does it have on their learning?
- 3) How might co-operative methods benefit the learning of English in Japanese university language classrooms?

B) Practical questions implied by the above

- 4) How do Japanese university students feel at present about the interaction in Japanese EFL classrooms?
- 5) How do they perceive and deal with interaction problems?
- 6) Are there any gender differences in terms of the way in which the students perceive and deal with classroom interaction?
- 7) How do teachers perceive and deal with problems in Japanese university classrooms?

In this chapter, I discuss the first three questions and in Chapter Five, I discuss the remaining four.

There are two groups of participants in the classroom, namely teachers and students. In this

chapter I focus on: 1) group dynamics, given the structure of both formal and informal groups in the language classroom; 2) how the teacher's and the students' behaviour influences group dynamics; 3) how groups are formed and developed in the language classroom; 4) what cooperative learning is and why it is important; 5) how cooperative learning may promote cognitive and metacognitive activity in Japanese university EFL classrooms; and 6) how cooperative learning may be introduced into these classrooms. I hope that the answers obtained for these three research questions will contribute to solving the problems in Japanese university classrooms.

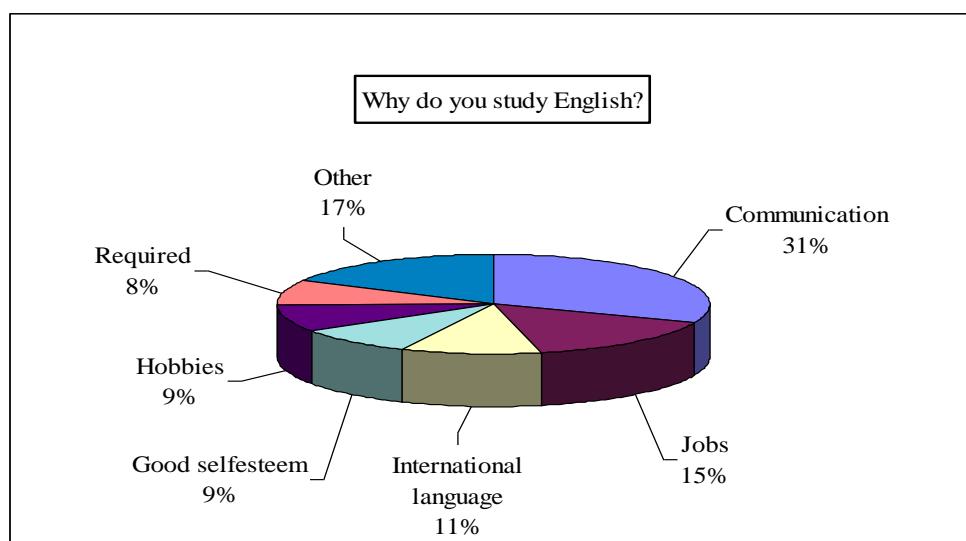
2.3 The Influence of Globalization on the Teaching of English in Japan

One important influence on the ways in which English is taught in Japanese classrooms has been linguistic globalization. When globalization started, the English language was spoken mainly in Britain, Canada, Australia and the USA. However, English nowadays does not belong to any particular country but has become an international language. This means that the use of English crosses most national borders. An international language is one which serves both global and local needs as a language of wider communication (McKay, 2002, p. 25).

In Japan, as in many other countries, the most recent change in the area of language teaching has been that the communicative approach is now supposed to be the dominant approach; but in fact, there is still tension between the communicative approach and the grammar translation method. Students in secondary schools still learn English through the grammar translation approach, because teachers who teach even secondary schools probably do not always know what the communicative approach entails. Many Japanese English teachers appear to prefer

the grammar-translation method to the communicative approach because of the nature of the university entrance examinations, even though MEXT would like teachers to teach English primarily as a tool for communication. The rise in the use of the communicative approach has been accompanied by the introduction of new teaching materials and learning aids involving video, computer-assisted language learning and multimedia. For some time now, Japan has also borrowed these aids to enhance English language learning, but without fully investigating what is happening in the classroom. Globalization means, for one thing, that people travel around more easily and speedily than before, and cultures mix. From their language classroom, students can also make contact with the outside world using the Internet, which exposes them to the English of native speakers. Many Japanese university students want to learn English for practical reasons, in order to communicate with people elsewhere in the world (p. 33) (see Figure 2.1) (Matsumoto, 2003). They also want to use English in everyday life. However, Japanese teachers are often ill-equipped to offer the necessary skills, since they tend in teaching English to have low creativity and poor pronunciation (Matsumoto, 2003, p. 34).

Figure 2.1 Why do you study English? (From Matsumoto, 2003; 33)



Graph 1.3 in Chapter One shows that one problem for Japanese English students is that their teachers want to teach grammar; another is the perception of the teachers' poor pronunciation and a third is their perception of the teachers' poor creativity. There seems to be a gap between what teachers can or want to teach in class and what students want to learn.

2.4 The need for group formation in Japanese university classrooms

The focus in this thesis is on the formation and development of groups in Japanese university classrooms, specifically in their English classes. With teachers as symbols of authority, there would seem to be a somewhat vertical hierarchy in university classrooms. Japanese English teachers tend to control students and give lectures which they have prepared in advance, without considering their students' comprehension or participation (Matsumoto, 2003, pp. 43-44). Interestingly, however, it was noted in the above source that when one native speaker of English used a more communicative Notional-Functional approach in the classroom, his students behaved like robots. He eventually changed his teaching method from student-centred to teacher-centred to save his students' language ability from deteriorating further (p. 45). He gave instructions one after another to his students, and they obeyed him literally, without any questions. Traditionally, students have always expected too much from teachers, even at university level. For example, some of my students ask me to write every important point on the blackboard, because they are used to copying what teachers write. They forget that, unless they think about what they are doing, their mechanical copying will not promote comprehension. In some respects, Japanese students have become robots whom teachers can control.

They [Japanese students] had learned subject matter, but they were not proficient at

problem solving and were unable to take initiatives to learn something on their own. They had learned to work quietly alone and to speak respectfully to adults, but they had not learned how to work effectively in small groups. They had worked hard through competition, but they had not learned how to cooperate. Even though they had respect for the rights of others, they did not know how to express their feelings to others and were afraid to state openly their frustrations and anxieties to the teacher or their peers (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, p. 236).

These days, however, the business world wants to hire graduates who can be creative, can communicate their ideas well and are willing to cooperate with other workers in the company. These are abilities which Japanese students tend to lack. Teaching methods in Japan do not produce what employers want, and graduates who lack creativity and communicative ability will not be able to compete for jobs with people from other countries. The Japanese government is worried about the future of Japan and, as we saw in Chapter One, it has tried to reform Japanese education by issuing numerous educational policies designed to improve the teaching of English.

In Japanese university classrooms, most students tend to sit at the back of the room, with only a few students at the front. Some students come late for class, leave after registering attendance, sleep during lectures, chat with their neighbours or fail to attend altogether. After six years of learning English through grammar-translation methods controlled by the teacher, they seem to have lost their motivation or sense of purpose in studying. Yet many of them profess a desire to speak English in the world outside the classroom. At the same time, however, students seem to struggle with communicative teaching methods, because they are so accustomed to merely absorbing information from their teachers and later memorizing it. Students may need to learn strategies for asking for help, asking questions and cooperating with their classmates. It would be useful if their teachers taught these strategies

before teaching the subject of English.

Figure 2.1 tells us that Japanese university students want to learn English as a tool for communication; teachers in response should therefore approach the teaching of communicative English more positively than before. Moreover, Japanese students are exposed to more authentic English day by day, due to the spread of technological developments, which in turn promotes globalization faster than ever, all of which has implications for the language classroom.

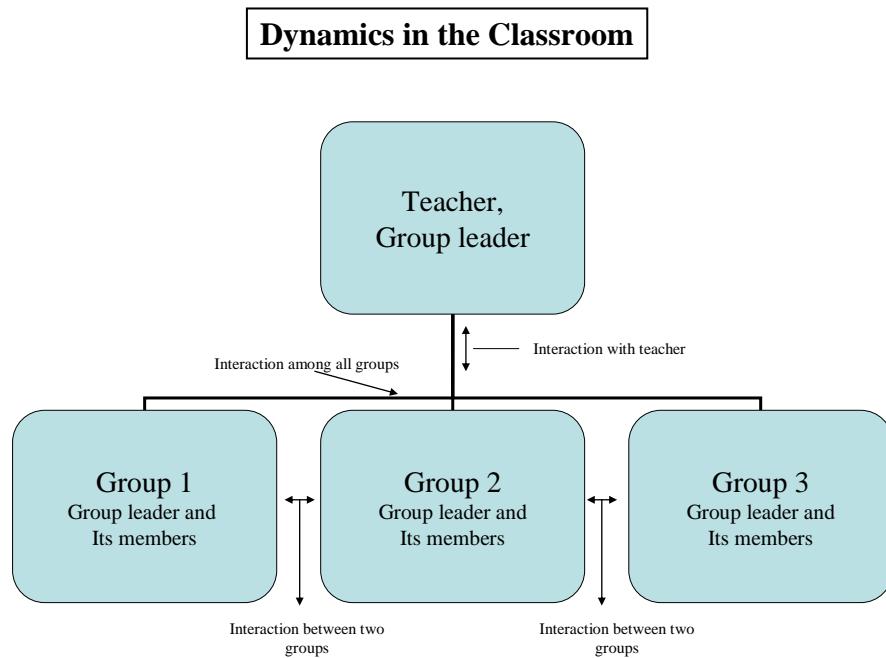
2.5 Group dynamics in the language classroom

The notion of the *group* is a very important one in language teaching contexts. In any group, there are leaders and members. The teacher is the leader of the class group, making most of the important decisions, while students are members of the smaller groups set up by the teacher to aid the process of learning English. Meanwhile, the class is composed of various informal groups, each of which has its own leaders and members, and these groups interact.

Figure 2.2 shows the structure of groups in a typical classroom.

There are a number of key concepts for a group structure: 1) interpersonal relations and group cohesiveness; 2) the norm and status system; and 3) group roles. Among them, cohesiveness is the most important variable underlying group structure.

Figure 2.2 The structure of both formal and informal groups in the classroom



Ehrman and Dörnyei define the characteristics of a group as follows: 1. There is some interaction (physical, verbal, nonverbal, emotional, etc.) among group members; 2. Group members are aware of the group's existence, that is, perceive themselves as a distinct unit and maintain boundaries relative to out-groups; 3. Group members share some purpose or goal for being together; 4. Group members demonstrate a level of commitment to the group and identification with it; 5. The group endures for a reasonable period of time (i.e., not only for minutes); 6. The group has developed certain organizational system characteristics and at least a rudimentary internal structure, as a result of which the behaviour of members can be ascribed to patterns of relationship within the group and not to the individual characteristics of the members (i.e., new members come to adopt the same behaviours, though they may not have them when they enter). The organizational system and internal structure include:

- The regulation of entry and departure into/from the group,

- Rules/norms/standards of behaviour for members to keep in relationship with each other,
- Relatively stable interpersonal relationship patterns and an established status hierarchy, and
- Division of group roles.

7. Finally, as a direct consequence of the behaviour for members, the group is held accountable for its members' actions (1998, p. 72).

I would now like to consider how the numbered characteristics above apply to Japanese university ELT classrooms. The first characteristic is certainly applicable because students interact with group members physically, verbally, nonverbally and emotionally, to achieve their goals and learn English. This is particularly evident when they have activities to perform, for example, playing roles, conversing with one other in dialogues, sharing their opinions, and so on. Sometimes students in a group do not like each other and they give up talking to each other. The second characteristic is also applicable to Japanese classrooms. Japanese people tend to welcome people in the same group as themselves, but not people from different 'out-groups'. The third characteristic keeps members working together and then the groups cohere strongly. However, this applies to very few Japanese university ELT classrooms when the class is asked to work in groups, because culturally the third characteristic, that of getting together to achieve a common goal, differs from its counterpart in Western countries. According to Anderson (1993), Japanese parents train their children to conform to other people (p. 104). From pre-school through junior high school, Japanese students learn group consciousness. For example, students clean their own classrooms every day after class. In classrooms, the teacher emphasizes cooperative learning. This is called

“group study”.

Cooperative tasks are also a feature of classroom lessons. In one such type of activity, known as *hangakushu*, or “group study”, students work in small groups to generate answers to problems, or collectively carry out art projects (p. 104)

Anderson calls this “consensus checking” (p. 102) and he argues that Japanese students are reluctant to ask questions, augment other people’s ideas or express their own, as members of groups elsewhere would do, because they have a different cultural background (p. 103). Japanese students seldom volunteer answers (p. 102), so it is correspondingly difficult for them to discuss or express their opinion in front of their classmates.

As Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) argue, the teacher influences the group climate and therefore the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh characteristics can be developed under participative teachers but not under authoritative teachers (p. 51). The success of group work appears to depend on the teacher’s personality and teaching methods and on the students’ background experience in school and at home.

Classroom groups begin at different stages, depending on the students’ past experiences in school. Students who have previously experienced primarily authoritarian teachers will be at different skill levels from students who have had ample experiences in communicating with one another and in collaboratively working on improving their group work (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, p. 49).

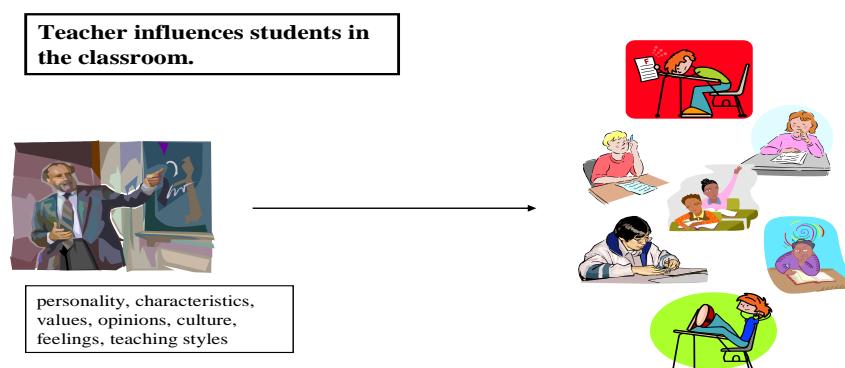
According to McVeigh (2003), Japanese students have some outspoken views of Japanese professors: one said “I think Japanese professors are very stupid, because they don’t care about the students.” Another said “Professors look down us and hold us in contempt ... professors seemed to be off in another world during lectures” (p. 230). In this situation, it

would seem difficult for teacher and student to interact. Without interaction, students find it much harder to learn and their group work has few of the characteristics listed by Ehrman and Dörnyei (see p. 27, above). Therefore, it seems unlikely the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh characteristics in the list will be found in Japanese ELT classrooms.

2.5.1 The teacher's influence on group dynamics in the language classroom

As a central leader in the dynamics of the class group, the teacher influences the learning climate because s/he has the authority, and students expect her/him to behave as a leader, a parent, and even a healer for disadvantaged and “special” learners (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 212). Each teacher has her/his approach to teaching and must adopt a teaching style and methodology to suit the students. However, it is sometimes difficult to do this because teachers, equally, are people. Teachers have personalities and characteristics, as students do, and these may have a positive or negative influence on students’ learning in the classroom (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3 The teacher’s influence on students in the classroom



Through students' attitudes, facial expressions, class participation, complaints or absences, teachers can work out what students think about their teaching style, methodology, personality and characteristics. Test results or simple questions about teaching, feedback from students about teaching, or students' comprehension of the language will tell teachers whether their teaching styles suit the students or not. If teachers want to teach better, they need to be prepared and willing to adapt their teaching style to their teaching situation. Research has shown that flexibility is a key to good group management (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997). Some teachers are authoritarian, others democratic, or with perhaps a very low quality of leadership. Authoritarian teachers can become obstacles to group development, because they want to control the groups. This attitude may raise some conflict with students, or even hostility, hindering the course of learning.

Seen from the perspective of group dynamics, the traditional authoritarian teacher role is undesirable because it does not allow for the group to structure itself organically, nor for the members to share increasing responsibility, and thus it is an obstacle to group development (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997, pp. 75-76).

In Japanese university classrooms, the teacher's platform is usually higher than the rest of the floor. This symbolizes that the teacher is an authority, to whom the students should listen obediently. This power relationship can easily lead teachers to be authoritative and narcissistic, not interacting with students during lectures. I remember as a university student that some professors used to read aloud from their notebooks for the whole class hour and that they seldom paid attention to the students or invited questions from them. All that the students could do was to take notes silently or sleep through the lecture.

Democratic teachers, in contrast, encourage students to share their thoughts and opinions with

them. They make students feel that it is safe to express their thoughts and opinions. As a result, the teacher and students can establish good rapport. To be good facilitators, teachers need empathy, acceptance and congruence because students look upon teachers as parents, hearers and leaders. However, the democratic approach is not without risk. If teachers are too democratic or give too much freedom to students, the students will take control of the session. If this happens, the students may choose not to work hard. A teacher who does not know when to exert control or authority as a group leader will equally not help students to learn.

Dörnyei (1994, p. 282) makes a number of suggestions related to teacher-specific motivational components. These suggestions may also help teachers to become more democratic. They include the following: 1) try to be empathic, congruent, and accepting; 2) promote learner autonomy; 3) model student interest in L2 learning; 4) introduce tasks in such a way as to stimulate intrinsic motivation and help internalize extrinsic motivation; and 5) use motivating feedback.

Ideally, ‘democratic’ teachers will create classrooms in which their students are able to work academically, whilst solving the social problems inherent in group work. These democratic teachers will be flexible in their teaching methods, and know when to intervene in student conflict. They will also know how to set up classroom structures so that students can take responsibility for carrying out tasks. If teachers are aware of visible and invisible happenings in the classroom, they will be able to enhance the learning, and better implement some of the approaches and methodologies which have been borrowed and adapted from those used in the West. Ideally, the teacher will act as a bridge between students so that they

can build a sense of trust in other members of the class. This makes learning easier and gives the tasks and goals a better chance of being accomplished. However, it is not always easy to act in this way, for groups are composed of people with different demographic characteristics such as age, gender, race, abilities, attitudes, belief and personalities; inevitably, these elements affect the group dynamics.

The learning experience of every student and the effectiveness of every teacher is influenced by what goes on among and between the people who populate the classroom (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 5).

Another factor which affects group dynamics and consequently language learning is sensitivity. Teachers should be sensitive to their students' personal emotional needs, because in the classroom as elsewhere, they may feel anxiety, loneliness, shame, frustration, hostility and so on. At times, students expect teachers or their peers to provide emotional support. If teachers force students to participate or learn in an English class in ways which they would not normally choose, they will notice that the teaching plans do not work or the students do not learn. In class, both teachers and learners need a sense of security and the protection of their self-image. Hence, psychoanalytical theory can play a vital role in solving teaching problems and improving degrees of tolerance:

Psychoanalytic theory holds that behaviours that originated in the individual's efforts to cope with external events and internal interpretations of those events develop into patterns of action and reaction that characterize an individual, often without regard to the realities of the current situation (Ehrman, 1998, p. 96).

Learning a language not only involves mastering new information and knowledge to do with the target language but it also involves emotions and personality. Therefore, it may be useful for teachers to know a little about psychotherapy. The psychotherapist and the educator

alike seek to develop change and growth in both cognitive and emotional processes. Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) claim that language learning is a deep psychological process:

Effective second language learning, for example, can involve relatively deep changes, not only in cross-cultural knowledge and receptivity but also in a more generalized acceptance of ambiguity, multiple ways of experiencing the world, and increased cognitive flexibility (p. 16).

Unfortunately, the learning process can sometimes be hindered when teachers fail to understand how dysfunctional classroom interactions between teachers and students and among the students can divert energy and attention away from the learning task (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 2). Ehrman and Dörnyei also agree with Stevick's (1980) claim that "...success depends less on materials, techniques, and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom" (p. 4).

As we saw above, a group is an assemblage of more than two people between whom cohesiveness is exerted in order to attain common goals. Students are formed into groups, and the individuals within the groups influence each other when they learn a language. If problems prevent the cohesiveness of the group, the students will not learn the language as well as they were expected to. It is useful to be able to arrange groups so that the members develop good relationships, socially and emotionally, in carrying out their tasks.

2.5.2 The impact of student behaviour on classroom dynamics

In every classroom, the students have different characters and different past experiences. Students can be kind, taciturn, talkative, showy, shy, adventurous, dominant, competitive, submissive, withdrawn, rebellious and so on. They may experience difficulties in coping

with others in class. Teachers also have different personalities. They too can be forcible, talkative, taciturn, dominant, showy, kind, patient, enthusiastic, etc. Both teachers and students inevitably bring their different personalities into the classroom, and the ways in which these personalities interact can have a profound effect on the types of learning which ensue. As Edge says:

All learners are different. No two individuals have the same knowledge, or skills, or expectations...Learners are also influenced by their age and by their educational, social and cultural backgrounds, which they may or may not share with their fellow students and teacher (Edge 1993, p. 9).

It is therefore important to focus on individuals, as well as groups. As students go through interdependence, interaction, competition and common goal-striving with their peers, they may look to the teacher to provide the same level of conflict-resolution skills as parents or counsellors.

Edge emphasizes the importance of a positive emotional environment in the language classroom, because the foreign language will be learned best when it performs the normal functions of language (1993, p. 19). If learners learn languages in a positive emotional environment, they will be motivated, have a good attitude, be confident to talk and make a personal investment in learning. The language will become meaningful and students will learn it well. But since such positive emotional environments can easily be damaged, Edge warns teachers that activities should not risk exposing students' feelings and advises that they should not be too personal in character.

2.5.3 The impact of gender issues on classroom dynamics

Another important factor which is likely to have an impact on classroom dynamics in the

present context is gender. There are difficulties when dealing with gender issues in language education because of oversimplified assumptions about the gender effect and about the radical social changes which took place in the 1990s. The understanding of the gender effect is now more sophisticated than before. In this section, I discuss old and new understandings of gender issues, and relate them to classroom interaction in Japan.

It has traditionally been claimed that people evaluate women as inferior language users and call them “the muted group” or “powerless language” users, citing male domination over any mixed conversation (Lakoff, 1975; Thorne and Henley 1975, cited in Pevlenko and Piller, 2008, p. 56). In EFL classrooms, gender operates on three levels, namely the language itself, classroom processes and the interaction between people in the classroom, whether teacher-student or student-student (Sunderland, 1992, p. 81). Sexism creeps into the classroom through the use of the generic “he” in course books and teachers’ guidelines. ‘Classroom processes’ refer to what is happening in the classroom because of people’s different genders, affecting their language learning styles and strategies, teacher-learner interaction, teachers paying more attention to male students than female students or varying by gender the level of difficulty of their questions. Learner-learner interaction refers to what goes on in pair work or group work and is used to increase opportunities for classroom communication. However, Sunderland later (2000) claimed that understandings of gender were more sophisticated, leading to a need to focus more on gender identity and to raise teachers’ awareness of the complexities and subtleties of gender in language education (p. 150).

In the context of EFL classrooms, Shehadeh (1999) researched gender-related differences in

interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers, and between non-native speakers. This study finds that same-gender dyadic interaction gave females a better context. Shehadeh concludes that men and women seem to play different roles in conversation with regard to the negotiation of meaning, dominance, interpersonal relations, the amount of talk and leading the conversation (p. 260).

There are three different frameworks to deal with gender issues; 1) in the differences framework, such as “women-as-a-group” and “men-as-a-group”; 2) in the study of linguistic diversity, and 3) in the study of second/foreign language education, which finds, for instance, that females generally do better than males in this field. However, beginning in the early 1990s, feminist linguists criticized all three of these frameworks because the assumptions about “men” and “women” are homogeneous categories and ignored individual differences (Pavlenko and Piller, 2008, p. 58).

These days, other researchers claim the reconceptualization of gender as a socially constructed and dynamic system of power relations and destructive practices, rather than an intrinsic property of particular individuals (Cameron, 1992, 2005; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992, cited in Pavlenko and Piller, 2008, p. 58). According to Pavlenko and Piller (2008), gender issues can be viewed through specific cultural and institutional contexts: 1) gendered access to linguistic resources; 2) gendered agency in language learning; 3) gendered interaction in the classroom; and 4) gender in the foreign and second language curriculum. They say that gender issues are central in language education, emphasizing three points: 1) ensuring equal access and equal conditions for participation for all students, 2) creating curricula which legitimizes the students’ daily realities and multilingual lives, and 3)

approaching language teaching from an intercultural and critical standpoint, which engages students with cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences in gender ideologies, constructions and performances and then allows students to analyze how dominant discourses of gender function to subordinate individuals (p. 66).

Even though these researchers claim that we have now achieved new understanding of gender issues, it is argued that teachers have yet to discover how important gender issues are.

While the study of gender is advancing apace, often in conceptually complex ways, new and even experienced language teachers are still continuing to discover its importance for the first time...as researchers discover some of the complexities of gender, and thus how some unhelpful generalization about and representations of female and male learners can be avoided (Sunderland, 2000, p. 169).

Sunderland also suggests three areas for gender research: 1) gender tendencies and similarities; 2) gender identities; and 3) educational disadvantage (p. 169).

Bernat and Lloyd investigated whether there are any gender differences in language beliefs and compared their outcomes those of previous studies. They conclude that:

Males and females in this study seem to respond in a similar fashion in terms of their beliefs about foreign language aptitude, the difficulty they perceive when learning a language, the nature of language learning, strategies in learning and communication, and their motivations and expectations. Males and females seem to differ significantly in their belief that multilinguals are very intelligent, with more females agreeing with that statement. They marginally differ in their enjoyment of practicing English with Australians, with women enjoying it less (Bernat and Lloyd, 2007, p. 89).

They also say that there is a need to do additional research before generalizing. It is interesting to look at the issue of gender in the Japanese context.

2.5.3.1 Gender problems in Japanese universities

Since Japan is a male-dominated country, I would like to investigate how female and male students and teachers perceive and deal with interaction problems in Japanese classrooms, for one-way communication still exists there, with mostly vertical interaction between teacher and students.

According to Hashimoto (1993), there are five specific points to absorb in order to understand the problems of English education in today's Japan: 1) the fact that English is a foreign language; 2) the relationship between language, individuals and Japanese society; 3) the role of oral communication in Japanese society; 4) ethnocentrism, nationalism and male-domination; and 5) language to help women realize their independent selves. Since it is undeniable that Japan is a male-dominated society, gender may influence its classroom teaching and learning of English. College faculty members who teach in ESL have been found to treat female students differently from male students in class (Hall, 1982, cited in Yepez, 1994). Hall also finds that the university classroom climate could frequently be inhospitable to women, due to the everyday inequities carried into these classrooms (p. 122): for example, females were given less time than males to answer, they allowed their classrooms to be male-dominated by accepting that male students were called more often than female students, that female students were asked easier questions than males and that eye-contact would be made more frequently with males than with females (Sadker et al., 1982, Thorne, 1979 and Hall, 1982 cited in Yepez, 1994, p. 122). Through a series of interviews Yepez (1994) found, however, that the attention of each ESL teacher is drawn, regardless of gender, to certain cultures and personalities and to specific students (p. 130). This may suggest that gender-based classroom interaction appears to need further study.

In my teaching experience at Japanese universities, I have found that Japanese male university students tend to look down on female teachers and female teachers tend to use words normally restricted to male use in the language, in order to show their authority and dignity.

In my present teaching experience, in a class of 37 students, I have 8 male nursing students, who tend to sit together. When they are grouped in pairs, they, like the female students, want to do their tasks with students of the same sex as themselves. Gender thus appears to affect the conditions for learning English in class. Although pair work or group work is used to increase the opportunities for classroom communication between teacher-student and student-student, there seem to be different rules of speaking for male students and female students (Holmes, 1989 and Edelsky, 1981 in Sunderland, 1992, p. 89). Sunderland sums these up in the following way:

... in pair and group work male students have been found to speak more frequently and take longer turns than the females, who provide more feedback – echoing the findings with mixed sex groups of native speakers of English (p. 89).

In this thesis, I hope to find what kinds of gender issues exist in the classroom in Japanese ELT classrooms and how teachers and students deal with them. My hypothesis is that there will be gender differences which may influence learning and teaching. Thus, one of my research questions is: “Are there any gender differences in terms of the way in which the students perceive and deal with classroom interaction?” This question is addressed in Chapter 5.

2.6 Visible and invisible Groups

The notion of visible and invisible groups was first introduced by Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998).

The difference between the visible groups and invisible groups in the language classroom are that the visible group is formed of the individuals who are its members, their one-to-one relationships and the structure of their observable behaviours, whereas the invisible group is formed by the covert network of relationships which operate at the level of the group-as-a-whole through unconscious processes and communications (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 77). Ehrman and Dörnyei apply these phenomena to the functioning of the group itself, but not to the individuals, considered as individuals, or the subgroups of individuals in the group.

For any given group, the same set of individuals constitutes both the visible and invisible groups; the distinction is a matter of level of abstraction and the framework for understanding a given behavior. Individuals act both as themselves and as representatives of the group (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 78).

As we saw above, understanding individuals (Figure 2.4) in the classroom is a vital factor in improving the learning of the target language. We might therefore expect the diversity of students in their invisible groups to affect the way in which they learn English.

Figure 2.4 (below) shows how students interact in groups. Each student can be affected by interpersonal processes.

Figure 2.4 How students interact in groups

Intermember relations in a group

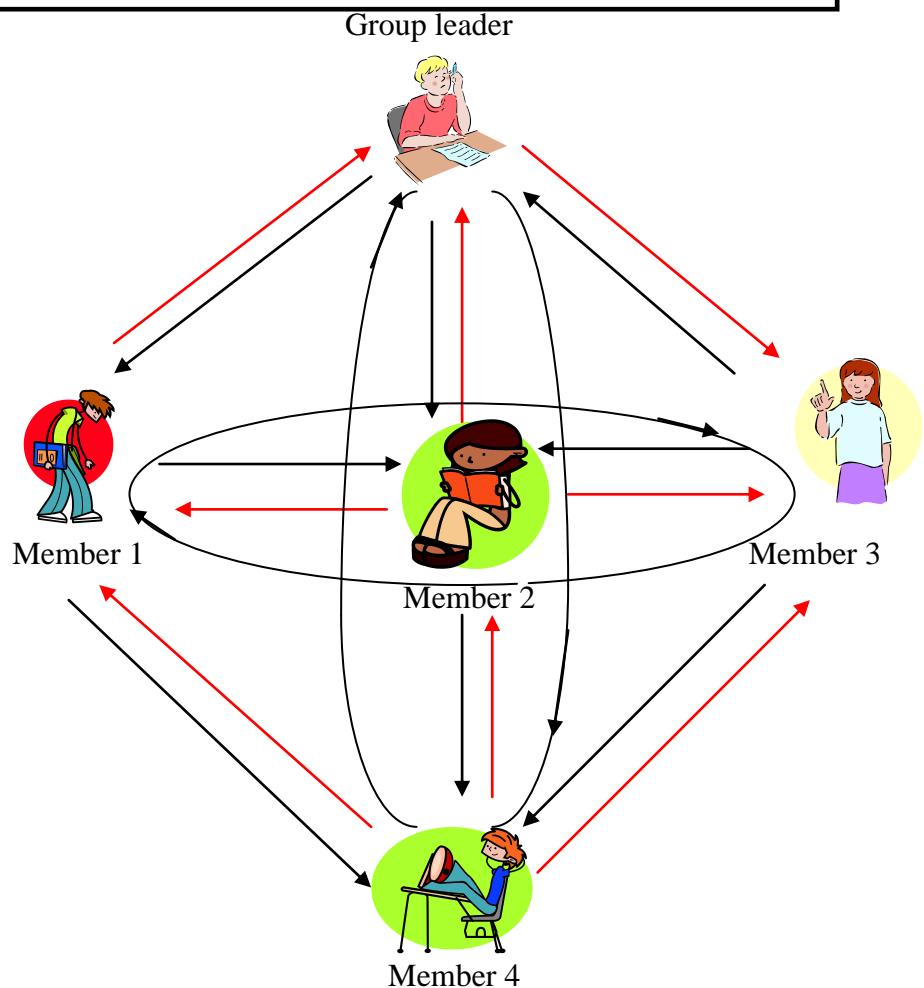
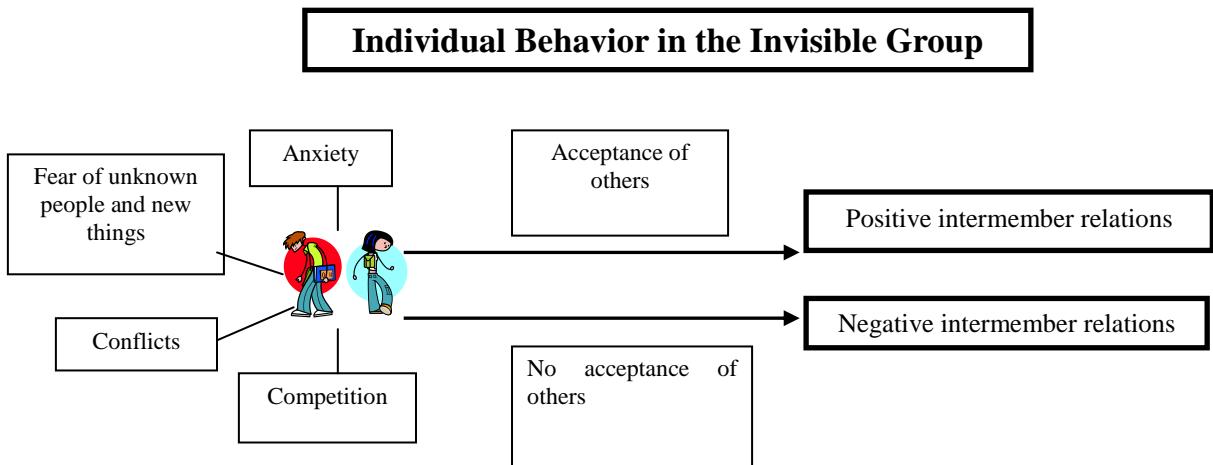


Figure 2.5 shows how individual students behave positively and negatively in a group.

Figure 2.5 Individual behaviour in the invisible group



Examples of individualist behaviour in the invisible group include: lack of tolerance, rigidity towards new things and different things, lack of flexibility, the interference of personal background, and a lack of attention to others. Strong feelings of envy and gratitude can influence interpersonal relations and these feelings are associated with experiencing a thing, person, or event as either all good or all bad. Ehrman calls this “splitting” (1998, p. 64). Envy is observed frequently in interpersonal processes and gratitude is seen when students express appreciation for the teacher or other members in a group. After students have gone through feelings of anxiety, fear of the unknown, hostility and competitiveness, they gradually learn to accept other members, and positive intermember relations will then be built up as they meet each other more often and over a longer time period. Positive intermember relations can be built by efficient facilitators: such people have empathic ability, acceptance of the group’s members, and congruency (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997, p. 76).

In the following sections I look more closely the nature of group dynamics in both visible and invisible groups.

2.6.1 Group dynamics (Visible groups)

An outstanding pioneer in group theory with a psycho-analytic background, Wilfred Bion, developed several theories of group dynamics and organizational psychology (1961), which have many applications to educational settings. His basic findings are that groups are usually typified by: dependency, pairing and the fight-flight option. The first of these characteristics, dependency, is shown by the fact that the group behaves as if the members are helpless and know nothing, while the leader is omnipotent and the source of group survival. The second characteristic, pairing, is his name for the group's expectation that two of its members will 'give birth' to a 'saviour'. This feeling of hope is characteristic of the pairing group because it leads to 'Hope' from feelings of hatred, destructiveness, and despair (Bion, 1961, p. 151). Two people in the group will generally emerge to play reciprocal roles in this Messianic solution; they become the focus of the group's attention, support, affection, hope and fantasy. The third characteristic, the 'fight-flight option' refers to a situation where the group behaves as if its survival is dependent upon immediate action, either of flight or fight. This pressure towards impulsive action results in the group's behaving as if it were a mindless mass (Agazarian and Peters, 1981, p. 50).

Bion argues that these features are a defence against the anxieties which are aroused in the members when one of them jeopardizes the work of the group. In one of Bion's patients' groups, the six members decided to call each member by their Christian names, since it made for friendliness and this matched therapeutic need (Bion, 1961, pp. 144-145). Bion suggests that there is mental activity (the Work Group) in any group and each member co-operates

according to his or her degree of sophisticated skill.

Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) define group dynamics as illustrating the proverb, ‘Many hands make light work’ (p. 3); group work achieves goals and tasks much better than a single member can, thus impacting significantly on learning. As we saw above, theories of group dynamics can be generalized to the behaviour of small group formation within the language classroom. Examples of behaviour reflecting a negative attitude are: being late for class, cutting class, letting the mind wander, chatting with neighbours, being silent when asked a question, blaming the language programme, ignoring other members in the group, and so on. Examples of behaviour which reflects a positive attitude are: displaying cohesiveness in a group, empathic listening and showing acceptance towards other group members.

In Japanese universities, it is widespread practice to teach very large classes, where the teacher is supposed to lecture and students expect that the teacher can answer all their questions. Even in language classes, teacher and students often interact only vertically, because the teacher is the authoritative figure in the classroom. That is, there is generally only one-way communication between teacher and students. One report found that the high rate of absenteeism among students is made possible by the one-way lecture system and this teaching style has increased the number of students who have to repeat the course (Nemoto, 1999, p. 228). Two-way communication in class would enhance the learning of English.

There are four primary levels of action in the learning process; 1) action within the individual (interpersonal processes); 2) interaction between two individuals (dyadic processes or dyadic relations; 3) interaction between members of a group (group dynamics); and 4) interaction

between groups (intergroup dynamics). These levels tell us something about what goes on in classrooms and what goes on within an individual (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 13) and a group. In the classroom, there are four aspects of group dynamics which are likely to motivate students' learning: 1) goal-orientedness; 2) a norm and reward system; 3) group cohesion; and 4) classroom goal structures (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 278). These are all useful, according to Dörnyei, for enabling students to attain goals as members of a cohesive group; otherwise, group membership is continuously changing and developing.

2.6.2 Group dynamics (Invisible groups)

According to Agazarian and Peters (1981), the deductive approach is associated with the invisible group and the inductive approach with the visible group; these terms have to be used with care because writers have no clear and agreed definition about what a group is (p. 27).

A major problem with this task is that when different people use the word 'group' there is no way to know if they are talking about the same thing. One person's group is another person's not-group (p. 27).

The visible group (using the inductive approach) is one in which we can observe the considerable interaction between the teacher and individual students in class and relatively slight interaction between the students themselves. Two-way communication in class would enhance the learning of English.

People behave in groups, but the invisible group arises from unconscious processes in hypothetical group structures and results in its own kind of observable behaviour. This consists of

phenomena that are representative of a group as a single entity in which the members play roles determined by group structure rather than as a collection of members (p. 20).

Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) define a group as something which consists of more than three interdependent individuals who influence one another through focused social interaction (p. 71). The members of a group spend sufficient time together to give a psychological reality to the group, thus establishing its cohesiveness, because each member commits him/herself to the group and the people in it. As we saw above, Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) argue that the invisible group is the covert network of relationships which operate at the group-as-a-whole level through unconscious processes and communications (p. 77). They add that a stable classroom group has an invisible structure, which can be inferred from the behaviour of the members (p. 78). Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) propose a useful table comparing visible and invisible groups and say that the distinction between the two is a matter of the level of abstraction and that it acts as a framework for understanding a given behaviour.

Table 2.1 Comparison of Visible and Invisible Groups

	Visible Group	Invisible Group
Composition	A collection of individuals	Group-as-a-whole system with a purpose and boundaries
Group constructs	Explicit norms and goals; individual member roles; individual attraction to group roles	Implicit norms and goal; group roles; role forces that are independent of individuals
Cohesion	A function of individual needs	A function of the group system independent of individuals
Level of	Conscious and	Unconscious

function	unconscious	
Emotional life	Among individuals	Basic assumptions
Vector	Individual stimulates group behaviour	Group stimulates individual behaviour

Source: Agazarian and Peters, 1981, adapted by Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998, pp. 54-55)

According to Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998), group dynamics are the products of true groups, not merely collections of individual learners. Within groups, the group dynamic can exert both positive and negative influence.

At a level of learning groups, a cohesive, well-functioning group can be a source of enhanced self-efficacy on the part of its members and of effective cooperation, in which member diversity is harnessed for the benefit of all. On the other hand, a poorly functioning group can result in apathy, inefficient learning, and, at worst, destructive psychological effects on the members accompanied by intense aversion to further learning (pp. 4-5)

2.6.3 Group development in the language classroom

The development of groups normally follows a four-stage process involving formation, transition, performing and dissolution (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, pp. 109-110).

2.6.3.1 Features of social and classroom groups

A classroom group, like a social group, usually comprises three or more interdependent individuals who influence one another through focused social interaction; focused interaction begins “when people effectively agree to sustain for a time a single focus, as in a conversation, a board game, or a joint talk sustained by a close face-to-face circle of contributors” (p. 71).

But some group characteristics are peculiar to classroom groups, illustrated in Table 2.2 below. In the classroom, the emphasis is more likely to be on productivity, the desire to obtain high test grades, enthusiasm for the target language and culture, and increased student and teacher motivation. Table 2.2 represents the way in which social groups and groups in the classroom both resemble and differ from each other.

Table 2.2 Features of social and classroom groups

Social group features	Classroom group features
1) There is some interaction (physical, nonverbal, emotional, etc.) among group members	1) There is considerable interaction among classmates; in fact, most of the teaching and learning in the classroom takes place by means of interaction.
2) Group members are aware of the group's existence, that is, perceive themselves as a distinct unit and maintain boundaries relative to out-groups.	2) Classes are distinctly recognizable social units, usually referred to both by the members and by outsiders with some label (e.g., Class 5:B; the lower sixth); that is, language classes have distinct boundaries — both physical and psychological ones.
3) Group members share some purpose or goal for being together	3) Classes are oriented to the attainment of a common stated goal, the mastering of certain skills and knowledge (even though the official goal may in fact not be the only, or even primary, goal of the class group).
4) Group members demonstrate a level of commitment to the group and identification with it.	4) Members of a class have a commitment at first to learn and eventually to the class group, and they regularly identify with their class.
5) The group endures for a reasonable period of time (i.e., not only for minutes).	5) Class groups typically function together for a period of months, if not years.
6) The group has developed certain organizational system characteristics and at least a rudimentary internal structure, as a result of which the behaviour of members can be ascribed to patterns of relationship within group and not to the individual characteristics of the members (i.e., new members would come to adopt the same behaviours even though they may not have them when they enter.)	6) Classes are highly structured: Once a class is formed, there are restrictions on entry and departure from the class; There are explicit norms and rules (e.g., no smoking and no chewing gum); There are obvious patterns of intermember relations (e.g., cliques, sociometrics stars, out-casts), and there is an internal status hierarchy; There are distinct roles (e.g., teacher, student, class clown); and New people joining the class adopt the norms and characteristic behaviours of the group, lest they be rejected and made into scapegoats.
<p>These structural elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulation of entry and departure into/from the group • Rules/norms/standards of behaviour for members to keep in relationship with each other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively stable interpersonal relationship patterns and an established status hierarchy, and • Division of group roles 	
7) Finally, as a direct consequence of the above point, the group is held accountable for its members' actions.	7) When a student either achieves well or misbehaves, it usually is considered to reflect either well or badly on the other class members.

The first feature of classroom groups is that they have more interaction among members than social groups allow, and students can interact more than they can in a social group. Frequent face-to-face interaction encourages students to recognize and accept differences among group members so that members can work together to achieve goals and tasks. The second feature of classroom groups is that they have a psychological reality with a life of their own and maintain their boundaries, whereas the boundaries of social groups are already defined. This means that members of a social group work only in groups and their interrelationships work only within their group. But in a classroom group, the members form a psychological reality with its own existence and are not a mere collection of persons. The third feature of classroom groups is that their members do not always share a purpose or goal, but that they acquire the skills and knowledge to achieve goals or purposes. The fourth feature is that members in classroom group have restricted freedom and therefore require more commitment to accomplish their tasks or goals than social groups do. The fifth feature of classroom groups is that they are together for certain periods of time to achieve goals. The teacher may change the members of a group after one set of members has met certain goals and purposes. Strong cohesiveness is more likely to be a feature of the classroom group than of the social group. The six features which we have discussed so far illustrate a number of identifying characteristics of classroom groups, such as the existence of cliques, rules and outcasts, whereas in social groups, the individuals adopt the same, sometimes unfamiliar behaviours. Sometimes, the roles in the social group are not very hierarchical, but in class groups they are. Classroom groups contain more distinct roles, such as teacher, student, secretary and class clown, and involve less freedom than do social groups. The seventh feature makes clear who is responsible for chiding misbehaviour or offering rewards. Misbehaviour affects the other members in both types of group. As seen above, group dynamics shape the second

language learning process, show teachers what goes on among students, and affect students individually in the classroom.

It may be helpful at this point to look at the functions played by groups in language education. Dörnyei and Malderez (1997, p. 67) identify five key functions. First, they can serve as a “resource pool which is greater in any given area than the resources possessed by any single member”; second, they can be instruments of behavioural or attitudinal change; third, they can be a substantial source of motivation to learn the L2; fourth, they can serve as an instrument of support and maintenance; and fifth, they can directly facilitate L2 learning. All of these functions are clearly of importance in language learning classrooms.

There are several reasons why knowledge of group processes is valuable to today's language educators: first, peer-group conflicts and rejections are too often accompanied by school violence; second, teachers and students face many disturbing social challenges, such as parental divorce, child abuse, drug abuse and so on. Teachers, as counsellors as well as educators, should be concerned to acquire conflict-resolution skills; third, peer-group life plays an important part in developing a student's self-concept; and fourth, members of groups begin relationships by first building a sense of trust in others. The classroom and group processes affect the way in which students will demonstrate their need for affiliation, power and achievement (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, pp. 25-26). Hence, groups have the potential to find out what goes on “inside” learners and between members of groups.

2.6.3.2 Group formation and development in the language classroom

Groups develop continuously after students get to know each other and begin to work together.

Many groups go through similar stages, the process of which is outlined by Tuckman and Jensen. Tuckman (1965) reviews fifty-five articles concerning the developmental sequence in small groups, examining studies of therapy groups, human relations training or T-groups and natural and laboratory-task groups. He proposes some general stages of development shared by the group-structure realm and the task-activity realm. Though he recognises the need for further research on natural and laboratory groups, he generalizes typical stages in group development, namely, forming, storming, norming and performing (Tuckman, 1965), to which he and his co-author later added 'adjourning' (Tuckman and Jensen, 1977). In the first stage, forming, members of a group establish dependent relationships with leaders, other group members or preexisting standards. The second stage, storming, shows members expressing their opinions or showing resistance, such as arises from group conflicts. Emotional response is a common characteristic at this stage. In the third stage, norming, new standards and roles are decided after the members have overcome this resistance. They then begin to express intimate and personal opinions. By the fourth stage, performing, an interpersonal structure formed by the group has become the flexible and functional tool for tasks, activities and roles; members now focus on the tasks which they must carry out. The fifth stage, adjourning, was added as an amendment to Tuckman's model, to acknowledge the fact that separation is an important issue for the life of the group. When groups disperse, members feel a sense of emptiness and loss and this has a positive influence on learning. As Hadfield (1992) says, it is important to give students some sense of continuity after the abrupt end of a course which may have been a major part of their lives for some three months, or even longer (p. 163).

In a language teaching context, Tuckman's ideas on group development are played out in the

following way: first, there is a process of meeting new or unknown member(s) in a dyad or a group. Though this makes students tense, they should learn to deal with unknown members so that they can cope with their tasks as a group; second, the students choose or observe the leader or the other member(s) in the group. During observation, students will find initial interpersonal qualities to draw their attention, such as physical attractiveness and similarities or differences in attitudes, personality and economic status; third, the students need to accept the other member(s) by learning about them. The key element in strong cohesion is that it is based on intermember acceptance, regardless of initial intermember attractions (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997).

Acceptance simply does not occur without knowing the other people well enough; enemy images or a lack of tolerance very often stem from insufficient information about the other party (p. 69).

This process of group development will be cyclical and sequential and works for the individual member as it does for the group as a whole.

Although, as we saw above, the members in every group inter-relate, it is easy for a teacher who is too authoritarian to impair group development. Learners are often sensitive to their teacher's attitude, which can vary in terms of preferred leadership patterns. A teacher can adopt a centralized approach or distribute the power within the group. The teacher's position of authority depends on five bases of power; namely, being legitimate (the initial source of the teacher's authority), expert, referential, rewarding and coercive.

The teacher has a great influence on the development of each group in the class. If a teacher intervenes in students' group work supportively and gives opportunities for them to choose and be responsible, students are more likely to produce good work in groups; but if teachers try to control students, they do not develop interpersonal trust or engage in classroom activities. As a result, a group may not achieve its goals or even carry out its tasks. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of their own influence so that they can recognize their effect on group life; when to stop, when to observe and when to listen, as well as when to concentrate on individual personalities. If teachers can be more aware and more open about their own abilities and limitations, they may help to generate more trust among their pupils (Luft, 1984, p. 182). Teachers may learn to manage classes better, share problems or improve their teaching skills if they discuss their classroom experience with other teachers; but, at heart, many teachers are afraid of criticism and adverse reactions. Teachers in Japan seem, moreover, to be under some pressure from the administrative staff, their superiors and their colleagues not to show anything which might weaken their authoritative stance and they may therefore find it difficult to develop high levels of empathy with their students.

2.7 Co-operative learning within classroom groups

According to Dörnyei and Murphey (2003), communicative teaching activities are based on small group work and active interaction between the students, while cooperative language learning is based on a small-group-based instructional approach built on the principles of group dynamics (pp. 6-7). Therefore, it is important to discuss cooperative learning historically and consider what part it can play in the language classroom.

Three key components of cooperative learning are: 1) group cohesiveness; 2) structured

learning; and 3) evaluation and rewards for achievement (Dörnyei, 1997, p. 483). It is said that cooperative learning is highly effective in the language classroom (Ehrman, p. 245). The next section examines how cooperative learning can work for Japanese students in classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language.

2.7.1 What is cooperative learning and why is it important?

Cooperative learning is an ancient idea and Table 2.3 (taken from Johnson and Johnson 1995, pp. 86-88) shows its history.

Table 2.3 History of Cooperative Learning

1st century	Quintillian The Roman philosopher Seneca	Head of a leading school of oratory in Rome. He argued that students could benefit from teaching one another. He maintained that the new learner was the best teacher. He advocated cooperative learning through the statement, “When you teach, you learn more.”
1529-1679	Amos Comenius of Moravia	He believed that students would benefit both by teaching and being taught by other students.
The late 1700s	Two opposing views of education Joseph Lancaster	1) Education was aimed at the religious purpose of immersing the poor in a godly and religious educational system. 2) Education was aimed at utilitarian social and political purposes, separated from religious views. Set up an apprenticeship system, in which students were arranged in classes, a class monitor was appointed, the monitor was placed in charge of cleanliness, order, and the improvement of each student’s learning. The monitors were taught by the master teacher and then in turn taught the students.
	Andrew Bell	He developed a similar peer teaching system in India. [In some senses this is not a peer teaching system because the monitor was, by

		definition, set <i>above</i> the other pupils]
From 1806	The Common School Movement Colonel Parker John Dewey	<p>A Lancastrian school was opened in New York City, where Lancaster had emigrated, which had a strong emphasis on cooperative learning.</p> <p>He brought to his advocacy of cooperative learning enthusiasm, idealism, practicality and an intense devotion to freedom, democracy, and individuality in the public schools.</p> <p>His instructional methods acted to promote cooperation among students and dominated American education at the turn of the nineteenth century.</p> <p>He emphasized the social aspect of learning and the role of the school in educating students in cooperative democratic living. He believed that the heart of democratic living is cooperation in groups.</p>
The late 1930s The late 1960s		<p>Interpersonal competition began to be emphasized in schools.</p> <p>Individualistic learning began to be used extensively.</p>

The theory of social interdependence was established by Morton Deutsch (1962) and involves two social implications: first, that it is competitive, as a form of “zero-sum game” because goals for individuals are negatively interdependent, with only the best students being rewarded; the other students thus lose their motivation to achieve goals or reward because of the presence of better students.

When students interact within a competitive context communication is minimized, misleading and false information is often communicated, helping is minimized and viewed as cheating, and classmates and faculty tend to be disliked and distrusted. Competitive and individualistic learning situations, therefore, discourage the active construction of knowledge and the development of talent by isolating students and creating negative relationships among classmates and with teachers (Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1995, pp. 9-10).

The second implication is that cooperative learning works positively among students who try to work together with others to do a task. Students try to encourage or help each other to make the effort required to achieve goals and complete tasks through peer teaching, joint problem-solving, brainstorming and interpersonal communication (Dörnyei, 1997, p. 484).

One reason why it is important to encourage cooperation in the language classroom is that it makes students feel less anxiety and stress. Anxiety undermines productivity and positive interpersonal relationships. It causes students to stay away from university, cut classes or take long breaks so as to avoid challenging classroom situations (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1995, p. 20). Cooperative learning, moreover, has been found to promote a higher level of reasoning strategies and critical thinking than more competitive or individual learning approaches do (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1995, p. 25).

2.7.2 To what extent does cooperative learning currently take place in Japanese university EFL classrooms?

Cooperative learning does not appear to be a key characteristic of Japanese university EFL classrooms. Table 2.4 (from Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1995, p. 7) contrasts old ‘information transfer’ paradigms of learning with new, more cooperative paradigms. It is very instructive to see how closely some aspects are related to the conditions of teaching in Japan; this seems to belong to the old paradigm and may be one of the reasons that English education in Japan has not achieved much, despite the various implementations of language policies and methodologies from the West.

Table 2.4 Comparison of Old and New Paradigms of Teaching

Knowledge	Old Paradigm Transferred from Faculty to Students	New Paradigm Jointly Constructed by Students and Faculty
Students	Passive Vessel to be Filled Faculty's Knowledge	Active Constructor, Discoverer, Transformer of Knowledge
Faculty Purpose	Classify and Sort Students	Develop Student's Competencies and Talents
Relationships	Impersonal Relationship among Students and Between Faculty and Students	Personal Transaction among Students and between Faculty and Students
Context	Competitive/Individual	Cooperative Learning in Classroom and Cooperative Teams and Faculty
Assumption	Any Expert Can Teach	Teaching is Complex and Requires Considerable Training
Ways of Knowing	Logico-Scientific	Narrative
Epistemology [sic] Mode of Learning	Reductionist [sic] Memorization	Constructivist [sic] Relating
Climate	Conformity/Cultural Uniformity	Diversity and Personal Esteem/Cultural Diversity and Commonality

Table 2.4 tells us that in the old paradigm the teacher's job was to give knowledge to her/his students, who waited to receive this knowledge and then memorized it. That is, students were seen as passive recipients of knowledge. The teacher then sorted students into various

categories and gave the students grades according to ability. Students and teachers competed, either with other classmates and/or with colleagues. The old teaching paradigm represents well the way in which many Japanese students and teachers still interact in the classroom. Japanese students wait for the teacher to fill their blank paper with the required knowledge and to be guides and leaders who can give them everything they need. Japanese students tend to be very passive recipients of knowledge.

2.7.3 Negative and Positive Social Interdependence

Interdependence influences positive and negative reactions and if there is no interaction when students learn in the classroom, teachers will realize that it is not enough simply to pair or group students in the hope that interaction will result in enhanced learning. It is best if teachers can discover the characteristics of social interdependence in each student before they approach cooperative learning. Traditionally, it is said that Japanese are group-oriented, but this is not invariably the case. Some Japanese students prefer to study by themselves and they tend to focus on their own achievement, ignoring other students, or at least not paying attention to encouraging other students in the classroom. Indeed, some Japanese students try to prevent any classmates from outperforming them. Overall, they can sometimes seem unwilling to promote the achievement of anyone but themselves and are not interested in their group's achievement. That is, as we will see later in this thesis, their interdependence is often negative or missing, hardly ever positive. It is common in the classroom for some students to ignore other students if they are neither cooperative nor doing well, or else to obstruct people who seem to be trying to outdo them; they do not share any information with their peers even when they work in groups. Johnson and Johnson suggest that simply pairing up students or grouping them does not encourage positive interdependence, but only

negative interdependence.

Positive interdependence results in students promoting each other's learning and achievement. *Promotive interaction* may be defined as individuals encouraging and facilitating each other's efforts to achieve, complete tasks, and produce in order to reach the group's goals...Negative interdependence typically results in students opposing and obstructing each other's learning. *Oppositional interaction* occurs as students discourage and obstruct each other's efforts to achieve...*No interaction* exists when students work independently without any interaction or interchange with each other. Students focus only on increasing their own achievement and ignore as irrelevant the efforts of others (1995, pp. 90-91).

However, if Japanese students were able to interact positively in the classroom, their learning would proceed more smoothly and better than it does now. This indicates an important task for teachers. Interdependence among students depends on whether the teacher's attitude is positive, negative or non-committal towards interdependence in the classroom. Table 2.5 shows the characteristics of social interdependence.

Table 2.5 Characteristics of Social Interdependence

Characteristic	<u>Interdependence</u>		
	Positive	Negative	None
Fate	Mutual Individual	Negatively linked	
Benefit	Mutual	Differential	Self
Time Perspective	Long-Term	Short-Term	Short-Term
Identity	Shared Individual	Relative	
Causation	Mutual	Relative	Self
Affiliation Motives	Enhance	Oppose	Oppose

Source: Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R., & Smith, K. (1994). Active Learning.

2.7.4 Group membership and individual assessments

One thing to consider here is a point made by Johnson, Johnson and Smith: that “in cooperative situations, students are bound together by their mutual fate, shared identity, and mutual causation and, therefore, celebrate (and feel benefited by) each other’s successes” (p. 14). When a teacher evaluates each student on the basis of group achievements or tasks, some students may think that the evaluation does not justly recognise their efforts; and if students feel that the evaluation is unfair, then it will be difficult for them to celebrate other people’s success. The teacher’s evaluation during each class must be planned carefully, because students are keen to get good marks. Ongoing assessment requires teachers to proceed very carefully and this will probably add to their workload. So it is better to have only small numbers of students in each class, to enable teachers to evaluate them fairly and observe them carefully. In Japan, unfortunately, the administrative staff expects teachers to teach big classes because it saves money. But this, historically speaking, would be a good moment to reduce the size of classes, because the population of applicants has gone down sharply and universities are not attracting as many students as they used to. This means that the size of classes could become smaller than ever before, unless the numbers of teaching staff are proportionately reduced.

2.8 The benefits of cooperative learning in Japanese university EFL classrooms for cognitive and metacognitive activity

Japanese university students are currently learning in competitive and individualistic classrooms where reasoning strategies and critical thinking are not trained. However, according to Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1995), cooperative learning promotes a greater use of higher level reasoning strategies and critical thinking than competitive or individualistic

learning strategies do (p. 25). This group of writers lists seven ways in which cooperative learning enhances cognitive and meta-cognitive activity. Hence, cooperative learning may provide a useful way forward. In this section, I look at each of their arguments in turn, and relate it to the current situation in Japan.

First, according to Johnson and Smith, the expectation set up by cooperative learning, that one will have to summarize, explain, and teach the rest of the group what one is learning, impacts on the learning strategies used. Japanese university students have not yet developed these strategies, because in class they tend only to listen and write down what teachers say. Teachers seldom invite or ask students to summarize or explain what the class should learn. If teachers want students to be able to summarize or explain what they have learned, they first have to change their teaching methods and styles. Small classes give more opportunities to students to summarize or explain than big classes. Group work or pair work in a small class may help students to talk about or discuss what they have learned.

Second, discussion within cooperative learning situations is thought to promote more frequent oral summarizing, explaining, and elaborating of what one knows. Orally summarizing, explaining and elaborating one's information, ideas and conclusions are necessary for the storage of information in the memory and the long-term retention of the information. As teaching and learning methods in Japan still seem to belong to the "Old Paradigm" (see Table 2.4), this stunts the ability in the students to summarize or explain and elaborate on what is known. But if Japanese students are to learn by comprehending, as opposed to memorizing, they should have more practice in summarizing, explaining and elaborating on what has been said. They need to experience collaboration in groups to carry out tasks successfully in the

classroom, while their teachers need to learn how to use collaboration in class and how to evaluate both each student and each group as a whole.

Third, cooperative learning groups are thought to be nourished by heterogeneity among group members. Learning experiences are enriched by the exchange of ideas and perspectives among students from high-, medium-, and low-achievement levels, handicapped and non-handicapped students, male and female students, and students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Japanese students often try to avoid conflict, so it might be very difficult for them to express their own opinions, ideas and arguments. However, if they experience acceptance by the members of a group, they will become more able to speak out, explaining what they think and feel and what they understand by the contributions of other students. They will mitigate their mutual diversity, peer pressure or fear of losing face in groups. This may be the key issue in the appeal of cooperative learning in Japan. Cohen, Lotan and Catanzaire (1990) suggest some solutions: that teachers need to have a fundamental understanding of what status problems are and how their action in the classroom will affect these problems (p. 227). There are some advantages to using norms and roles: making curricula for cooperative learning; learning to treat the issues of multiple ability and what expectations of competence to form. Students depend on the teacher's judgment of students' competence; thus, the expectations of weaker students' competence will rise. Viewing videotaped sessions, teachers can see examples of students' logical and spatial awareness, check how exact this is and assess their progress better.

The teacher is a high-status source of evaluations for students. If teachers make evaluations of students, students are likely to believe those evaluations. Theoretically, this treatment ensures that competence expectation for low-status children are raised because they will accept the teacher's evaluation of themselves as competent on relevant

skills...The advantage of continuing to try to change expectations for competence lies in the tremendous potential that cooperative learning in combination with successfully treated expectations for competence has in academically heterogeneous classrooms (p. 228).

Fourth, in most cooperative learning situations, students with incomplete information interact with others in the same situation but who have different perspectives and facts. Teachers as leaders of the groups can easily give more information to these students, thus allowing the students to interact with other students.

Fifth, within cooperative learning groups, members externalize their ideas and reasoning so as to meet critical examination. Considerable peer monitoring and regulation of one's thinking and reasoning are needed. As a leader, the teacher can solve this problem and it is one of the teacher's roles in the classroom to do so.

Sixth, members are likely to give each other feedback concerning the quality and relevance of contributions and ways to improve reasoning or performance. Typically, personalized process feedback is given continuously as part of the interaction among group members. In cooperative learning groups, feedback is ideally received from fellow group members and discussed face-to-face in ways which make the personal implications clear. But it is very difficult for students, Japanese ones in particular, to give feedback. It requires more academic knowledge and a good deal of information to evaluate other members' comments. However, teachers can gradually move from asking students to give easy feedback to asking them to give it in more difficult areas, so as to accustom them to the process.

Seventh, involved participation in cooperative learning groups produces conflicts between the ideas, opinions, conclusions, theories, and information of members (pp. 27-29). Students can negotiate with each other and, if they do not agree, teachers need to mediate or persuade other members of the group to solve these conflicts. Thus it seems that, on balance, Japanese university EFL students stand to gain a great deal from the introduction of cooperative learning into their classroom settings.

2.9 How might cooperative learning be incorporated into Japanese university EFL classrooms?

It is easy to say that cooperative learning might benefit Japanese EFL learners. It is more difficult to say how it might be introduced into the current system. Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998, p. 262) adapt the writings of Cohen (1994) and Johnson and Johnson (1995) to show that cooperative behaviours to facilitate the performing of tasks are difficult for Japanese students; they say that such students would benefit by receiving a full explanation of cooperative learning which told them how and why some activities are valuable. For instance, they could be shown the techniques of paraphrasing and clarifying other members' contributions, summarizing the ideas of all the members, negotiating ideas and coming to a joint decision, managing conflicts by discussing differences of opinion or ideas, expressing disappointment/frustration/anger without causing offence, using "I feel..." statements rather than "You..." statements, giving constructive feedback, criticizing ideas without criticizing people. When a teacher invites Japanese students to express their own opinions or thoughts, they tend to claim, "I have just the same opinions or thoughts as he or she has." They do not try to paraphrase what they have heard and it has often not occurred to them that they should express their opinions and thoughts in their own words. It is too easy for students to say,

“My opinions and thoughts are the same as those. I cannot add anything.” For teachers, it is often very difficult to persuade students to express their individual opinions and thoughts in their own words.

In competitive situations communication and information exchange tends to be nonexistent or misleading and competition biases a person’s perceptions and comprehension of the viewpoints and positions of other individuals. Individualistic situations are usually deliberately structured to ensure that individuals do not communicate or exchange information at all (Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1995, p. 15).

However, if Japanese students were taught and encouraged to do these things, university teaching could perhaps develop into the new paradigm. Slavish memorization, a passive learning style and competitive learning would then become things of the past and then cooperative learning could be promoted.

Cooperative learning provides the means of operationalizing the new paradigm of teaching and provides the context within which the development of student talent is encouraged. Carefully structured cooperative learning ensures that students are cognitively, physically, emotionally, and psychologically actively involved in constructing their own knowledge and is an important step in changing the passive and impersonal character of many classrooms (Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1995, p. 10).

Ehrman and Dörnyei suggest some cooperative learning ideas which could turn an individualistic learning approach into a cooperative one. The first idea is that learners should spend most of the class time working and learning together in small groups, usually consisting of between three and six members. This is unlike today’s classroom learning in Japan, where learners usually study side by side with many students, none of whom knows the others.

The second idea is that group members should be made responsible for one another’s learning

as well as their own: The activity should be structured in such a way that learners can attain their own personal goals only if the whole group is successful, thereby generating an intensive process of interaction. This would constitute a quite new definition of learning for Japanese students, because in their present view nobody is expected to take responsibility for other students' learning. Group work or pair work is not nearly as common in classrooms as lecturing.

Ehrman and Dörnyei's third idea is that, consistent with the previous point, evaluating and rewarding the *group's* achievement should become at least as important as evaluating and rewarding individual achievement, and sometimes more so (1998, p. 247). At present, teachers in Japan evaluate students according to individual achievement and they sort them into different categories, but rarely do so according to the achievement of the groups with which they work. It is possible that they may not have learned how to evaluate students on the basis of group achievements.

If we are going to promote cooperative learning in Japanese university EFL classrooms, it is important to think about how we are going to do it. Olsen and Kagan list five principles for promoting cooperation among students in the classroom (1997, p. 484). They are:

1. Structuring the goal: group work towards a single team product (e.g., joint performance). This principle may work in large classes even if the teacher cannot monitor many students nor help them in a short time, so long as the teacher tries to give everyone a fair share of attention.
2. Structuring the rewards: in addition to individual scores or grades, some sort of team score is also calculated and joint rewards or grades are given for the group's overall production. Japanese students are keen to get good grades, so this will probably encourage each student to

work harder to achieve goals and do the tasks.

3. Structuring student roles: assigning different roles to every group member so that everybody has a specific responsibility (e.g., “explainer,” “summarizer,” or “note-taker”). To structure student’s roles, teachers must know individual students’ abilities well and students should take roles willingly. Otherwise, students cannot take responsibility for their roles. The teacher must give good reasons for each role, so that all students will agree to fill them, so as to overcome Japanese students’ reluctance to assume a group role.

4. Structuring materials: either limiting resources so that they must be shared (e.g., one answer sheet for the whole group) or giving out resources (e.g., worksheets, information sheets) which need to be fitted together (i.e., the jigsaw procedure). This is a good way to encourage students to share information with one another.

5. Structuring rules: setting rules which emphasize the shared nature of responsibility for the group product (e.g., no one can proceed to new projects or material before every other group member has completed the previous assignments). This is a good strategy for persuading students to encourage or help each other, but some weak students will lose motivation because of their low self-esteem. The teacher must establish a good rapport with students and help weak ones as much as possible, to prevent them from losing face before more able students.

Johnson and Johnson (1995) mention a number of other conditions for effective cooperative learning: individual accountability, mastery of social skills, and regular group processing. Teaching social skills is crucial because group efforts are often damaged by negative interactions which reduce interpersonal activity and impede the learning and achievement of some students. The social skills for cooperation are leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills. Students need training in cooperative skills and they need the opportunity to develop them. One of the aims of this

thesis is to assess the extent to which these conditions are currently being met in Japanese university EFL classrooms.

Next, I discuss obstacles to implementing cooperative learning and suggest how cooperative learning might be incorporated into Japanese university EFL classrooms.

2.9.1 Obstacles to and suggestions for implementing cooperative learning

There are some obstacles to implementing cooperative learning in the Japanese university situation, such as the classroom environment, role problems and the question of evaluating each student.

First, classrooms in Japan are not designed to encourage students to communicate, because it is expected that the teacher will face learners sitting in columns and rows, with the teacher as the centre of communication. The spatial organization influences the flow of interaction and communication (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p. 77); in Japan, there is not enough space between students' seats for them to interact or for the teacher to monitor.

Since the desks and chairs in the classrooms are usually fastened to the floor, which, together with the traditional teacher-fronted seating arrangement hinders cooperative learning, there are two spatial obstacles to overcome: 1) the inequality created among students and 2) the extreme control, which emphasizes only teacher-student visual contact and helps the teacher to monopolize the communication network (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p. 80). It is likely to lead to one-way communication, even though the MEXT says that it would prefer English teachers to introduce two-way communication. These are the physical obstacles, but also

there are, of course role problems and the question of evaluating each student. These will be discussed below.

MEXT expects Japanese university students to contribute internationally in many ways. For this purpose, they are expected to learn how to communicate their expertise, feelings, thoughts, opinions and values to other nations. These days, there are more opportunities to work with people from other countries in Japan or in developing countries. The classroom is a suitable place for Japanese university students to learn how to work together with other people to perform tasks and attain goals. I believe that as students get used to encountering the feelings, thoughts, and opinions of others in the classroom, they will gradually come to accept them and, once they have put anxiety, fear of the unknown, and hostile, competitive impulses behind them, they will enjoy positive intermember relations. Johnson (1995) claims that student-student interaction indeed promotes cognitive learning if it is structured and managed appropriately.

...student-student interaction can reduce cognitive conflict, and thus foster cognitive restructuring and development. It can foster the use of more exploratory language and encourage informal learning styles and strategies among students. It can enhance students' abilities to work collaboratively, encourage collaborative rather than competitive social relationships among students, and foster positive attitudes toward school (pp. 113-114).

If students do not know by the time they graduate how to cope with different people, or how to resolve conflicts, they will not be employed by Japanese companies because the most sought-after candidates are those who can communicate their ideas well and cooperate with other workers.

However, Japanese students do work in groups at primary school and junior high school.

They have learned to get consensus cooperatively in such situations as *hangakushu* “group study” or the *gakkyuukai* “class meeting” (Wadden, 1993, p. 104). If Japanese university students used the skills and strategies which are used in *hangakushu* to achieve the goals and tasks given in their English classes, they would probably be able to study cooperatively. I wonder why MEXT does not recommend group study at high schools and universities. If tertiary level teachers were asked to use it, the present classroom arrangements would need to change. In fact, at some primary schools, their classroom arrangement supports communication and students can move their desks and chairs around to make group work or discussion easier.

It seems that MEXT, six years after it introduced the policy, is indeed preparing to improve classroom arrangements:

MEXT is also promoting the development of a “New-Generation-Type Learning Space” equipped with specifications suited to information technology (IT) classes and small-group teaching contemplated in the new Courses for elementary and lower secondary schools, which have been implemented fully from FY2002 (<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/org/formal/15.htm>, accessed on April 22, 2008).

Figure 2.6 shows a new style of a classroom at a primary school. The desks and chairs are not nailed down to the floor and the students sit in a circle so that they can see all the members in a group.

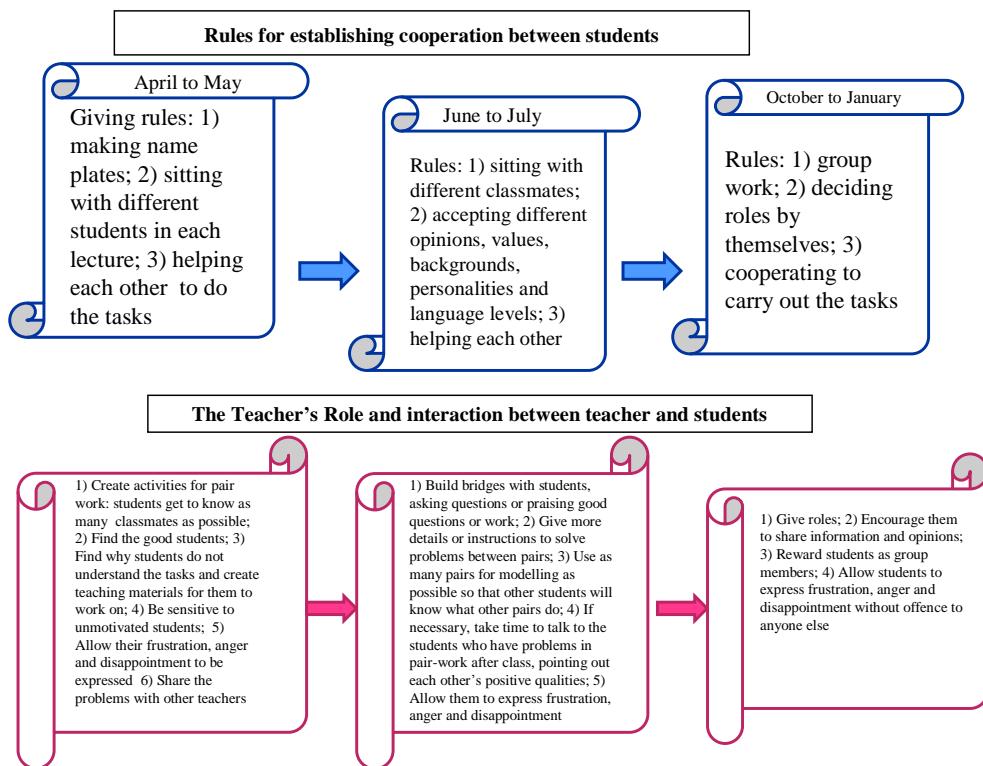
Figure 2.6 Lessons in a classroom with a foreign assistant teacher



<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/org/eshisaku/eshotou.htm>

The students whom I observed in a classroom at one of the state universities preferred group work to lecture-style learning. It is possible to use traditional classrooms for pair-work or group work if some students turn to face the others in a group of four, though it depends on how many students altogether are in the class. But in this arrangement the teacher may not be able to monitor all the students because of the limited space between desks. There is clearly a need to change the seating arrangements in Japanese English classrooms. Figure 2.7 shows a series of procedures for the academic year for moving from pair work to group work, to further the ends of cooperative learning.

Figure 2.7 Procedures for the academic year for moving from pair work to group work



A second obstacle is that it is the teacher who often decides the roles within the groups.

Japanese university students do not willingly volunteer to be group leaders, for example, and

to save time teachers, who tend to know which are the good students, choose group leaders.

Some students may complain about their roles, if the teacher imposes them. Usually a

Japanese language class has many students and it will take some time before the teacher can

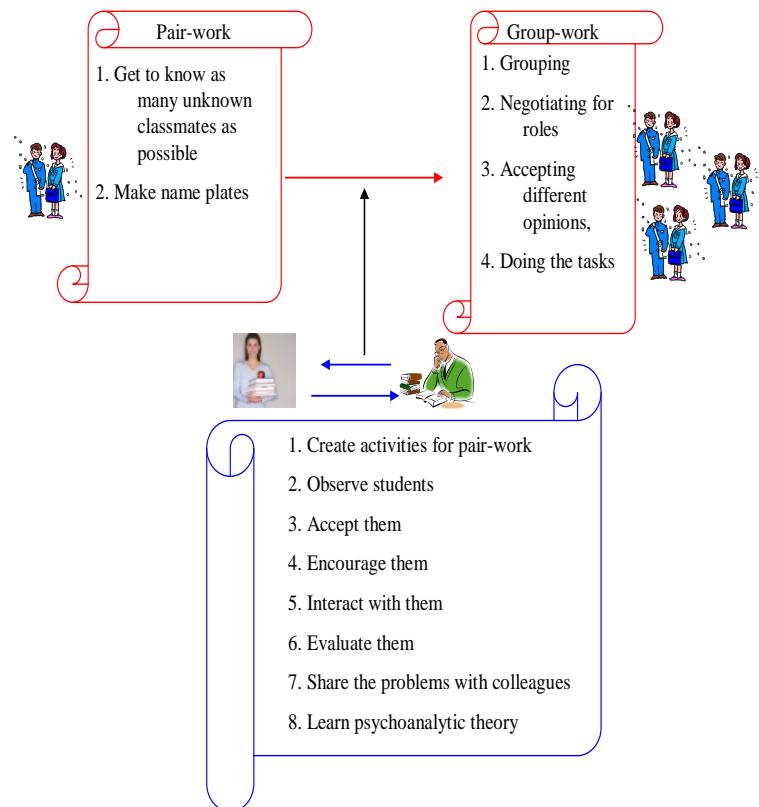
get to know the language level, skills, background, personality and characteristics of the

students as individuals.

...students are not 'simply' language learners. They are all individuals, each of whom has his or her own psychocognitive make up, personal history and life goals, and his or her own experience of education in general and possibly of language education in particular (Tudor, 2001, p. 33).

In particular, part-time teachers tend to find it hard to know their students individually. The administrative office, however, tends more and more to employ part-time English teachers, on whom language teaching more and more depends, because they cost less. It is particularly difficult for part-timers to know their students individually, as they have to leave directly after the class ends. But, if teachers use ice-breaking activities for a few sessions at the beginning of the semester, their students can feel more assured of a safe learning climate and of being accepted. If teachers are democratic, the students will enjoy learning; this will enhance the interaction between teacher and student or among students. Figure 2.8 shows how this may be done.

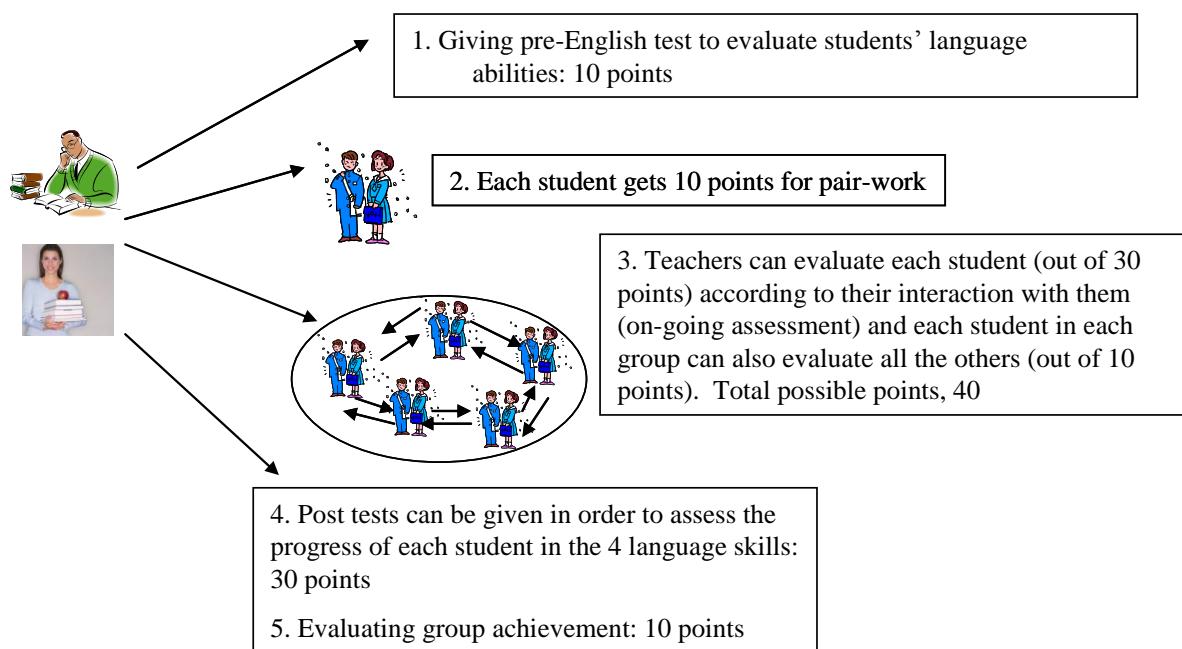
Figure 2.8 The process of establishing cooperation



The third obstacle is evaluating each student. This seems to be the most difficult task for teachers. Olsen and Kagan (1997, p. 484) have five principles for promoting cooperation among students (Chapter 2, p. 78) and I use some of them for evaluation. As noted above, every teacher had to teach 15 sessions during the spring semester when I observed. I want to suggest that they use 5 of these sessions as meetings for getting together, so that each student starts level with the others. After the students have all got to know each other better, the teacher can evaluate them as follows:

- 1) 30 points to be allocated at the end of the semester for group achievement, such as oral presentations, projects in English such as writing a newspapers, advertisements, posters, debates or discussions of topics chosen by group members. The teacher can hold a contest for the groups and invite judges.
- 2) 40 points to be allocated for sharing information, helping weaker students in groups and taking responsibilities for roles. 30 points out of these 40 can be used by the teacher to evaluate each student (on-going assessment) and the remaining 10 points can be used by students to evaluate how the others in their groups cooperate. The reason that the teacher asks students to evaluate their classmates is to prevent anyone's hard work or laziness being disregarded, since no teacher can observe everyone in every class.
- 3) 30 points to be allocated for indicating students' progress in the four skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening. Teachers can give tests, prepared beforehand, at the beginning and the end of the semester. Figure 2.9 shows this in graphic form.

Figure 2.9 Evaluation



2.10 Summary of theories of group formation and the influence of cooperative learning

In this chapter, I began by exploring theories of group formation and the way in which it influences inter- and intra-member relations in the classroom. Both teacher and students go through the processes of forming groups by 1) meeting new or unknown members in the classroom, 2) observing each other and 3) accepting the other members of the class. Successful group formation depends heavily on teachers because they are authoritative figures and students tend to follow teachers' decisions. Accepting the members in one's group enhances learning and it is the key issue in the successful learning and teaching of the target language. This group process develops cyclically and sequentially, but it does not work simply by dividing students into groups. Students need to know the other members of their group and teachers also need to know their students. Evaluation is the most difficult element

in group work and it is for teachers of English to learn to evaluate groups or pairs, despite being more used to evaluating students for achievement and despite students' expecting individual assessment.

Next, I discussed how cooperative learning affects L2 learning in Japanese university classrooms. To make cooperative learning work in the classroom, the key issue is that students must understand that cooperative learning means trying to work together with others to carry out a task or to attain a goal. As teaching in Japan still belongs to the Old Paradigm, we cannot at present expect much cooperation, because, in competitive and individualistic learning situations, communication is minimized and negative relationships are created among students and teachers. Therefore, working in small groups, taking responsibility for each other's learning as well as their own, applicable evaluation and rewarding will enhance communication and improve cooperative learning. If teachers are flexible enough to change their teaching styles and approaches, Japan's teaching may then move into the New Paradigm to improve learning:

Effective teaching depends crucially on a teacher's ability to negotiate a shared and mutually meaningful understanding of language learning with their students, but within a context which is shaped – and often powerfully so – by the perceptions and goal structures of a variety of other participants, many of whom may be physically distant from the classroom ... The reality of classroom teaching and learning emerges dynamically from this complex set of interactions among participants (Tudor, 2001, p. 46).

To make a sound basis for these suggestions, the present research seeks to answer the following questions, as listed on p. 21 above:

A) The theoretical primary research questions

- 1) What kind of visible and invisible inter-member relations exist between Japanese university students in the language classroom and how do they affect their learning?
- 2) How does the teacher's behaviour affect the students' behaviour, and what impact does it have on their learning?
- 3) How might co-operative methods benefit the learning of English in Japanese university language classrooms?

B) The practical questions implied by the above

- 4) How do Japanese university students feel about current interaction in Japanese EFL classrooms?
- 5) How do they perceive, and deal with interaction problems?
- 6) Are there any gender differences in terms of the way in which the students perceive and deal with classroom interaction?
- 7) How do teachers perceive and deal with problems in Japanese university classrooms?

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the methods and instruments used for research in second language education, and the importance of triangulation. I then go on to discuss the research methods which I used in this thesis.

First, I discuss research into language teaching, explaining why the process of triangulation is important, and describe the specific data collection instruments used in this study, concentrating on their derivation, objectives and design. The sources used in this first section include Brown (2001) Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), Berg (1998) and Holliday (1994, 1999 and 2002).

In order to answer these research questions I conducted a two-part study. In Part 1, I took a close look at what went on in four Japanese university EFL classrooms (two in one private university and one each in two state universities). I observed the teaching sessions myself, making video recordings for later consultation. I then interviewed students who had participated in the sessions and all four teachers. My aim during these observations and interviews was to find out what kind of interaction patterns there were. I was also interested in establishing whether there were any areas of conflict in the classes, and if so, how teachers and students perceived and dealt with this conflict.

During this part of the study, as we will see later in the thesis, a number of different issues emerged with respect to the types of interaction that took place and the ways in which it was perceived. Different types of conflict were observed, and I was able to study how they were perceived and dealt with, by both teachers and students. Gender issues also appeared but were difficult to examine systematically.

In order to study these findings more systematically, in the second part of the study I used the data obtained in Part 1 as a basis for creating a questionnaire which I then distributed to 793 university students studying EFL in eleven Japanese prefectures. Through this questionnaire, I aimed to find out what kinds of conflict they felt were most common in EFL classrooms, how they dealt with this conflict, and how tolerant they were of it. I also administered a questionnaire to 275 university and college EFL teachers to find out what they felt were the main causes of conflict in the classroom, and how they dealt with it.

Before going on to describe this research in detail, I would like to discuss a few broader issues related more generally to second language teaching research.

3.2 Research methods

Different research methods are used in order to gather data, which are then used as a basis for inference and interpretation. In this study, I made use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The approach used in Part 1 (classroom observation and interviews) was mainly qualitative, whereas the approach used in Part 2 (the questionnaire survey) was mainly quantitative.

This is because ‘qualitative researchers are interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how the inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles and so on.’

Qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings (Berg, 1998, p. 7).

Qualitative researchers aim to find the meaning of what happens in everyday life (Holliday, 2002). Holliday argues that this approach does not tell us about ‘a culture’ because he says that ‘culture’ does not refer to prescribed, or ‘essentialized’ ethnic, national and international features (p. 12). On the contrary, his definition of culture refers to composites of cohesive behaviour within any social grouping, from a neighbourhood to a work group. Qualitative researchers can nevertheless speak of ‘a culture’, but only in the sense of the specific piece of society they have chosen to draw boundaries around for the sake of their research (Beales et al, 1967:8 in Holliday, 2002, p. 12).

Holliday has two definitions of culture, depending on whether it is ‘large’ or ‘small’: ‘large’ signifies ‘ethnic’, ‘national’, or ‘international’; and ‘small’ signifies any cohesive social grouping. A ‘small culture’ approach thus attempts to liberate ‘culture’ from notions of ethnicity and nation and from the perceptual dangers which they carry with them (Holliday, 1999). Holliday avoids the prescriptive view of culture, but emphasizes the fact that culture is a dynamic, ongoing group process in changing circumstances, with the purpose of letting group members make sense of and behave meaningfully within their context.

The approach is largely interpretative (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 22).

Interpretive researchers try to understand the world around people before focusing on individuals and their interpretations of the world around them. The interpretive perspective is suitable for Part 1 of the present research, where the situation is limited to what goes on in classrooms. It focuses on students and English teachers individually, in order to learn about what is going on in these people in class time. Normative researchers, in contrast, want to know what methodologies are useful for discovering things about many people at a time; they try to establish common theories of human behaviour.

In the second part of the study, I used questionnaires which contained both closed and open questions. These produced data which were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively to interpret the results. I have sought to be an interpretive researcher because I am trying to understand what happens in classrooms between teacher and student and between student and student. I wanted to learn how students and English teachers, working together, interact and deal with what they see as their problems.

In the next section, I discuss the research methods for gathering data in order to answer my research questions. I compare the advantages and disadvantages of using triangulation, classroom observation, questionnaires and interviews, and then discuss why I used them to follow classroom events and discover answers to the research questions.

3. 3 Gathering data

Language teaching researchers generally gather data through the use of oral interviews or

written questionnaires with quantitative or qualitative questions (Brown, 2001, p. 2).

There are other tools for gathering information for research purposes: giving tests, observing, holding meetings, etc. Data can be collected by individual, group or telephone interviews, or from self-administered or group administered questionnaires.

To analyse these data statistically, descriptive statistics are useful for the initial analysis, before using central tendency, dispersion and other statistical techniques. In my study, I used the methods of classroom observation and interviews (in Part 1) and questionnaires (in Part 2).

It is not wise to depend on only one method of data gathering; this may bias or pervert the researcher's understanding. Instead, triangulation, which of course presupposes multi-method approaches, allows the data in a survey to be verified.

3. 3. 1 Triangulation

According to Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 236), there are six principal types of triangulation used in research: 1. Time triangulation: this type attempts to take into consideration the factors of change and process by utilizing cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. 2. Space triangulation: this type attempts to overcome the parochialism of studies conducted in the same country or within the same subculture in making use of cross-cultural techniques. 3. Combined levels of triangulation: this type uses more than one level of analysis from the three principal levels used in the social sciences, namely, the individual level, the interactive level (groups) and the level of collectivities (organizational, cultural or societal). 4. Theoretical triangulation: this type draws upon alternative or competing theories in preference to utilizing one viewpoint only. 5. Investigator triangulation: this type engages more than one observer.

6. Methodological triangulation: this type uses either (a) the same method on different occasions, or (b) different methods on the same object of study.

There are obvious advantages in using triangulation; first, it is useful when an established approach yields a limited and frequently distorted picture. Second, it is useful where a researcher is engaged in a case study, a particular example of complex phenomena (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 115). For my research, I used “Space triangulation”, by distributing questionnaires in 11 prefectures in Japan, so that I could gain many kinds of data from different places. This minimized the threat of parochialism in the study. Each prefecture has its own subculture and the results gave me different views of English language education and the problems at Japanese universities for English teachers and students. I also used methodological triangulation as I addressed the same set of research questions through classroom observation, interviews and questionnaires.

In the next section, I discuss the first approach taken in this study, that of classroom observation. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has never investigated this enough, although it recommends many teaching methods and approaches from Western countries. It is important to focus on what happens in classrooms in order to find the visible and invisible inter- and intra-relations between teachers and students.

3.3.2 Classroom observation

The classroom is the usual place for English teachers and students to work together, using many kinds of activities and teaching methods; students in class can learn the target language

either from other students or a teacher or both. Classrooms have been described as exceptionally busy places where billions of events occur (Wragg, 1994; p. 2). Researchers focusing on classroom interaction between teacher and students and students and students can obtain detailed and deep information. According to Corson and Van Lier (1988) and Ellis (1994), the classroom is something like a ‘black box’ (Ellis, 1994, p. 243), in mentalist theories. Classroom research gives the facts about what goes on in language learning when observers are present (Ellis, 1994 and Van Lier, 1988). There are some aspects of the language classroom which lend themselves well to observation: teacher-talk, error treatment, teacher’s questions, learner participation, task-based interaction and small group work.

According to Brown (2001) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 305), observations are useful tools for providing direct information about language, language learning, or the language-learning situation (p. 4) and it is the best data collection technique for gaining insight into the subjects in a natural environment. Researchers can obtain data on the physical setting, the human setting, the interactional setting and the programme setting.

Moyles (cited without date in Coleman & Briggs, 2002), lists the main advantages of observation, as follows (p. 174): 1) It gives direct access and insights into complex social interactions and physical settings; 2) It gives permanent and systematic records of interactions and physical settings; 3) It is ‘context sensitive and ecologically valid’ (Denscombe, 1998: 156); 4) It enriches and supplements data gathered by other techniques (allowing triangulation and thus increasing reliability); 5) It can use very varied techniques, yielding different types of data and with the potential to be applied in widely different contexts; and 6) It can be used to address a variety of types of research question.

Observation as a tool for the researcher can be powerful, flexible and ‘real’ (Moyles, undated, cited in Colman and Briggs, 2002, p. 172). Therefore, observation is likely to be a good way of finding out what actually happens in a classroom. In this study I videotaped interactions within classrooms where a target language was being learned, to examine the visible inter-relations which obtained there. I believe that this enabled me to obtain some essential elements of the situation and the tapes became a very useful tool because they let the sequences of a lecture, events or activity be played back as many times as necessary (Moyles, 2002, p. 181).

Observations can be of several kinds: highly structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Researchers can also choose their type of participation, whether participant or non-participant. In participant observation, the researcher is with the participants for a certain time to record what is happening as s/he takes part in activities and so on. That is, the researcher becomes one of the participants in a natural setting. However, participant observation is susceptible to the criticism that it is prone to be subjective, biased, impressionistic, idiosyncratic and lacking in precise quantifiable measures. In particular, criticism can be directed at the validity of observation-based research, because the case study researcher observes individual units – a child, a class, or a school – but not scientific paradigms.

When the researcher becomes part of the natural setting, the other participants do not know who the researcher is. This may raise sensitive ethical issues. In educational research, non-participant observers generally outnumber participant observers; they observe from a distance and they know what they want to observe and why. Another advantage of this kind

of observation, which to me was decisive, was that it did not disturb the teaching and learning of my subjects. I wanted to gather my data in as natural a setting as possible.

In non-participant observation, the researcher observes the phenomenon without taking part in it with the participants. According to Coleman and Briggs (2002, p. 178), researchers spend a considerable time in the classroom or in meetings with their research equipment. They take particular measures, such as avoiding eye-contact with subjects and wearing unobtrusive clothing.

In the present study, I did not take part in any of the activities which I observed. Non-participant observation is useful for revealing the visible inter- and intra-relationships between teacher and student and among students; it shows how the teacher influences learning and how problems in the classroom can be dealt with. Hence, I used this method.

Among observational techniques, tape recording, videotaping and cameras may be used to find patterns and to gather data in natural situations. The advantages and disadvantages of the audiotape recorder for class observation have been listed by Hopkins (2002, p. 116), as follows:

Table 3.1 The main advantages and disadvantages of audiotape recording

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Very successfully monitors all conversations within range of the recorder ● Provides ample material with great ease	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Nothing visual – does not record silent activities ● Transcription largely prohibitive because of expense and time involved

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Versatility - can be transported or left with a group ● Records personality developments ● Can trace development of a group's activities ● Can support classroom assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Masses of material may provide little relevant information ● Can disturb pupils because of its novelty; can be inhibiting ● Continuity can be disturbed by the practical problems of operating
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Some features of audio-recording are not, of course, applicable to video-recordings. One disadvantage of a video-recorder is that the focus range is fixed by the researcher, so that some data are always lost. This happens when the researcher fixes the video camera in front of the classroom and then moves around among the students during group work. If the researcher holds the camera while moving, to generalise from my research, the camera can focus on different groups in turn and on the teacher. The students whom I recorded did not appear to be distracted by the presence of the camera or by mine. They appeared to welcome me and continued with the work of the class once they had listened to my self-introduction and the purposes of my research in English and Japanese.

Videotape recording has both advantages and disadvantages, as shown below in Table 3.2 (Hopkins, 2002, p. 116).

Table 3.2 Main advantages and disadvantages of the videotape recorder

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enables all situations to be constantly reviewed ● Origin of problems can be diagnosed ● Behavioural patterns of teacher and pupils can be seen ● Patterns of progress over long periods can be clearly charted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can be very conspicuous and distracting ● If camera is directed by operator, it will only record that which he or she deems to be of importance; operator acts as editor

For the classroom researcher, there are three main uses for the videotape recorder: 1) to obtain visual material illustrating the total teaching situation, 2) to act as an aid to diagnosis; and 3) as a means to examine in detail a specific teaching episode (Hopkins, 2002, p. 115). In my study, the video recordings served all three of these purposes. I set the video camera in a corner and then I started to move around among students to record their visible relationships with other group members and the way in which they interacted with the teacher and their classmates. Later, I viewed the tapes repeatedly to analyse the inter- and intra-relationships and to learn how they influenced learning and teaching.

Hopkins (2002, p. 127) tabulates the taxonomy of classroom research techniques, giving their advantages and disadvantages (see Table 3.3 below). It is helpful to see them all compared with one another.

Table 3.3 Taxonomy of classroom research techniques

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Advantage(s)</i>	<i>Disadvantage(s)</i>	<i>Use(s)</i>
Field notes	simple; on-going; personal; <i>aide-mémoire</i>	subjective; needs practice	• specific issue • case study • general impression
Audiotape recording	versatile; accurate; provides ample data	transcription difficult; time-consuming; often inhibiting	• detailed evidence • diagnostic
Pupil diaries	provides pupils' perspective	subjective	• diagnostic
Interviews and discussions	can be teacher-pupil, observer-pupil, pupil-pupil	time-consuming	• triangulation • specific in-depth information
Videotape recorder and digital photography	visual and comprehensive	awkward and expensive; can be distracting	• visual and diagnostic • illustrates critical incidents
Questionnaires	highly specific; easy to administer; comparative	time-consuming to analyse; problem of 'right' answers	• specific information and feedback
Sociometry	easy to administer; provides guide to action	can threaten isolated pupils	• analyses social relationships
Documentary evidence	illuminative	difficult to obtain; time-consuming	• provides context and information
Case study	accurate; representative; uses range of techniques		• comprehensive overview of an issue • publishable format
Mapping techniques	comprehensive; easy to administer and analyses	requires whole staff response; can be threatening; confidentiality sometimes challenged	• provides a map of the process of change in a school • can be used to promote development

I also used unstructured observation because this too is a very useful way of finding out what is happening in the classroom in a natural setting. It allowed me to watch the actual happenings for myself (Baily, 1978, p. 237). However, videos cannot provide information about the invisible relationships in the classroom (Hopkins, 2002, p. 106), so interviews are needed to complement them. In my study, I therefore interviewed 3 students from the state university where the Canadian teacher taught and 3 students from the other state university where the Japanese English teacher taught. At the private university, I interviewed the two teachers who taught the classes which I observed and 2 of their students.

In this section we have seen a justification for my use of non-participant observation and video recording. In the next section I will look at the use of interviews in EFL research, and justify the particular approach taken in this study.

3.3.3 Interviewing

It will be remembered that the main purpose for conducting the interviews was to gather in-depth qualitative data concerning the teachers' and students' perceptions of classroom interaction and areas of conflict. Interviewing is one of the ways for researchers to obtain answers to their research questions, but the determination of what type of interview format to use must relate to the kinds of question being asked and what sort of answers are expected. An interview can have many purposes, but it is generally defined as evaluating or assessing a subject through face-to-face or telephone conversation between two or more people in a conversational style. As a result, an interviewer can clarify ambiguities, obtain more information as required, or make clear what s/he wants to find out. Among the purposes of interviews are, first, to evaluate or assess a person in some respect, often for the purpose of selection for a post or a promotion; second, to effect therapeutic change, as in the psychiatric interview; third, to test or develop hypotheses, fourth, to gather data, as in surveys or experimental situations; and, finally, to sample respondents' opinions, as in doorstep interviews (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 268). The respective roles of the interviewer and interviewee are carefully planned and the techniques used are crucial for collecting data. Trust, curiosity and naturalness are vital for interviewing. I was able to have face-to-face semi-structured and unstructured interviews with 4 teachers and 8 of the students, in which I asked about what I had observed in their classrooms.

Interviewing, too, has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that an interviewer can get a fuller range and depth of information than by other means and can develop a good relationship with the interviewee. The disadvantages are that interviews take much time and that an interviewer can bias the respondent or the responses. To reduce bias,

the interviewer must carefully formulate the questions, be trained in the procedures and choose respondents according to probability sampling.

Perhaps the most practical way of achieving greater validity is to minimize the amount of bias as much as possible. The sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent and the substantive content of the questions (Cohen and Manion, 1994, pp. 281-282).

An interviewer should use audio- or videotaping during the interview, unless the respondent objects.

Table 3.4, which is adapted from Brown (2001, p. 75), summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of interviews.

Table 3.4 Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Interview	High return rate Fewer incomplete answers Can involve realia Control environment Order of answering controlled Other observations can be made Relatively flexible Relatively personal Relatively rich data (written and spoken) Can be relatively complex	Time-consuming and expensive Small-scale study Never 100% anonymous Potential for subconscious bias Many other sources of potential bias Potential inconsistencies Scheduling somewhat restricted Restricted geographically

From this, it appears that, though it has some disadvantages, interviewing is a powerful way of getting an insight into a respondent's perceptions.

Four kinds of interview may be used as research tools. First, the structured interview: this means that an interviewer organizes the content and procedures in advance and then has little freedom to make modifications. Second, the unstructured interview: this by definition has much more flexibility and freedom than the structured interview. Semi-structured interviews have some of the characteristics of both the first two and so may be considered halfway between them. Third, the non-directive interview: these are chiefly found in therapeutic or psychiatric contexts and have minimal direction or control by the interviewer, in order to allow the interviewee to express his or her feelings freely. Last, the focused interview; this is focused on the interviewee's subjective responses and the interviewer plays an active role.

According to Fontana and Frey (1994), a structured interview is one in which the interviewer controls the pace of the interview, asking questions with a tape-recorder; in this setting the interviewee has little flexibility to answer (p. 363). Examples of such interviews are telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews, intercept interviews in shopping malls and parks and interviews associated with survey research.

Group interviewing is associated with marketing research, using a focus group in order to ask specific questions about a topic; in these, the interviewer directs the interaction and inquiry in either a very structured or a very unstructured manner. The group interview has the advantages of being inexpensive, data-rich, flexible, stimulating to respondents, with general conclusions easily recalled, cumulative and elaborative, over and above individual responses.

The disadvantages of this type of interview are that: the emerging group culture may interfere with individual expression, one person may dominate the group, the group format makes it difficult to research sensitive topics and “group-think” is a possible outcome (Fontana and Frey, 1994, pp. 364-365).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, pp. 287-288) also list the advantages and disadvantages of group interviews, drawing on Watts and Ebbutt (1987). The advantages are that there is potential for discussions to develop so as to yield a wider range of responses than individual interviews would; they are quicker than individual interviews; they bring together people with varied opinions, or as representatives of different collectives; for children, they are less intimidating than individual interviews. The disadvantages are that they require skilful chairing and attention to the physical layout of the room and group size; they exclude personal matters; and they create problems when it comes to coding the responses. I thought that with Japanese students there was a particular risk of “group-think” because the culture of Japanese people leads them to seek group-consensus. My results might have shown not what individuals thought but what they supposed other people to think, providing data which were misleading. Therefore, I did not use group interviewing for my research.

Unstructured group interviewing can circumvent the time-consuming nature of individual interviews; this type is used to understand the complex behaviour of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization which might limit the field of inquiry.

In this study, I used interviews which were partly semi-structured and partly unstructured, because they combine open- and closed-ended questions for small-scale research.

Semi-structured interviews can yield many different kinds of information, listed by Harlen and Wake (1995, p. 1); they can gather factual information about people's circumstances; collect statements of their preferences and opinions and can explore in some depth their experiences, motivations and reasoning. Semi-structured interviews are used to gain greater depth of understanding than could be expected from a questionnaire. The main characteristics of a semi-structured interview are as follows: it is a formal encounter on an agreed subject and 'on the record'; the main questions set by the interviewer create the overall structure; prompts and probes are used to amplify the information (prompts induce the interviewees to consider the wider picture, while probes induce them to look below the surface for further detail); there can be a mixture of closed and open questions; the interviewee has a fair degree of freedom in what to talk about, how much to say, how to express it; but the interviewer can assert control when necessary (Harlen and Wake, 1995, p. 13).

According to Oppenheim (1996, p. 65), interviews are divisible into the exploratory, in-depth and free-style kinds, together with the standardized sort of interview used in large-scale surveys. Exploratory interviews are heuristic, intended to develop ideas and research hypotheses. They can broaden and deepen the original plan of the research but when conducted in depth are costly and time-consuming.

Usually the term 'interviews' refers to 'conversations with a purpose held in order to gather information'; the ways to conduct interviews, however, are varied. The standardized interview uses a formally structured schedule of interview questions and the rationale is to offer each subject approximately the same stimulus so that responses to the questions will,

ideally, be comparable (Babbie, 1995 in Berg, 1998, p. 60). This process seeks to elicit the interviewee's thoughts, opinions and attitudes about study-related issues on the assumption that people's thoughts are related to their actions. Unstandardized interviews do not use schedules of questions but allow interviewers to develop, adapt and generate questions and follow-up probes during the interview process. This type of interview is useful when researchers are unfamiliar with respondents' lifestyles, religious or ethnic cultures or customs and other similar attributes. The semistandardized interview uses a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics, leaving interviewees free to respond. The researcher thus approaches the topic from the interviewee's perspective. To get deeper information, I used semistandardized interviews with some predetermined questions and added follow-up questions after I had observed classes or to help interviewees to relax and answer easily in particular cases.

The purpose of my interviews with teachers and students was in part to discover how, in the students' perception, the group dynamic affected their learning. Semi-structured interviews were prepared, using a combination of open- and closed-ended questions and adding further questions derived from class observations. All the interviewees appeared willing to be interviewed. For the teachers, there were general questions and also questions about interaction and cross-cultural differences (see Appendix 1). For the students, there were questions to elicit general information and other questions about their classroom interaction and cross-cultural differences. Both groups were asked other questions related to the visible and invisible relations which emerged from the class observations (see Appendix 2).

All the interviews were recorded with the interviewees' agreement. Care was taken to

adhere to the appropriate research ethics, as outlined by BAAL (Web-link). Students and teachers were informed of the nature of this study and given the right to refuse to take part altogether or at any point in the procedure. Consent forms were obtained from all participants.

So far we have looked at the approach taken in Part 1 of the study. In Part 2, I adopted a much more quantitative approach based on questionnaires. This is discussed below.

3.3.4 Questionnaires

It will be remembered that the purpose of the questionnaire survey was to gather quantitative information about the way in which the interaction and conflict in Japanese university EFL classrooms are perceived by both students and teachers. Questionnaires are widely used to collect data; they are popular for gathering descriptive information and an inexpensive way to gather data on a large scale, as in nation-wide surveys and social surveys. They are no less useful for small-scale surveys.

Drafting and piloting the questionnaire are vital if the findings are to be useful. The questions should be designed and organized so as to obtain the personal, educational and occupational characteristics of the respondents. There are two types of questionnaire: the first is a self-administered questionnaire, which the respondents answer whenever and wherever they like and return by mail. Oppenheim (1992, p. 103) discusses some of the advantages and disadvantages of different types of questionnaire. If the researcher distributes the questionnaires in person to the respondents, there tends to be a high response

rate, accurate sampling and a minimum of interviewer bias through necessary explanations; it also gives the benefit of personal contact. However, if the researcher does not administer the questionnaires, three problems may arise (Brown, 2001, p. 6): (1) they often have a low return rate; (2) they must be completely self-contained and self-explanatory, because on-the-spot clarification is not possible; (3) the researcher does not know the conditions under which they were completed.

The second type of questionnaire is group-administered; if one copy goes to every respondent in the group to answer in the researcher's presence at the same time and place, the three problems mentioned above will not arise. Brown (2001) gives the reasons for this (p. 7): (1) because the students will be a captive audience, who will generally feel obliged to fill out the questionnaire; (2) because the researcher is present to explain any ambiguities or confusions that arise; and (3) because the researcher will know the exact conditions when the students filled out the questionnaires. The present study uses a group-administered questionnaire to secure its data.

Questionnaires are especially suited to gathering data of both kinds, quantitative and qualitative, using open-response questions and closed-response questions. Brown (2001, p. 75) summarises the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires. To overcome some of their disadvantages, Brown (2001, p. 86) gives a list of guidelines for increasing mail survey return rates, which are shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Guidelines for increasing mail survey return rates

Guidelines for increasing mail survey return rates
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use a cover letter. 2. Keep questionnaires short. 3. Offer some incentive. 4. Provide return postage. 5. Supply a self-addressed envelopes. 6. Also put address somewhere on questionnaire. 7. Use follow-up letters or phone calls. 8. Time mailing carefully.

The guidelines for writing good survey questions cover three aspects of the questionnaire: the form, the meaning and the respondents (Brown, 2001, p. 45). Table 3.6 shows some guidelines for writing good survey questions and is taken from Brown (2001, p. 45).

Table 3.6 Guidelines for writing good survey questions

Think about the form

- Don't write overly long questions
- Don't write unclear or ambiguous questions
- Don't write negative questions
- Don't write incomplete questions
- Don't write overlapping choices in questions
- Don't write questions across two pages

Think about the meaning

- Don't write double-barrelled questions
- Don't write loaded questions
- Don't write leading questions
- Don't write prestige questions
- Don't write embarrassing questions
- Don't write biased questions

Think about the respondents

- Don't use the wrong level of language
- Don't use questions that respondents may be unable to answer
- Don't assume that everyone has an answer
- Don't make respondents answer questions that don't apply
- Don't use irrelevant questions
- Don't write superfluous information into questions

The proper drafting of a questionnaire is crucial in securing useful findings. There are guidelines for drafting questions (Munn and Drever, 1991, pp. 22-23): compilers should consider brevity, language level, clarity in questions and categories, the knowledge base for opinions, the ease of respondents' access to factual information, the need for information about personal characteristics and the avoidance of leading questions. Moreover, piloting is crucial, for the following reasons: small-scale piloting can indicate how long respondents need to fill out the questionnaire and to make sure that the system and terms are understandable to the respondents or if the questions need revision before they can be interpreted correctly and answered within the time allotted.

The questions serve two main purposes: descriptive and explanatory. Descriptive questions provide simple demographic or other descriptive information, such as gender, age, nationality and so on. Explanatory questions provide more in-depth information about the respondents, their ideas, attitudes, opinions, evaluations etc. with regard to a particular language, nationality or culture. Explanatory questions lead to inferences about what has been observed in the research process.

Open-response questions give the respondents freedom to answer in a way that seems most appropriate to them and this can reveal patterns and trends among responses. Closed-response questions can easily be analyzed numerically, while descriptive and inferential statistics may help in investigating existing patterns, similarities and differences.

There are advantages and disadvantages with both open-response and closed-response

questions; these are set out in Table 3.6 (Brown, 2001, p. 37).

Table 3.7 Open-response vs. Closed-response questions

Type of question	Advantages	Disadvantages
Open-response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide range of possible answers Exploratory in nature Relatively easy to write 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively difficult to answer Respondents more likely to skip Relatively difficult to code Relatively difficult to analyze Relatively difficult to interpret Some answers may be irrelevant Answers relatively subjective Relatively difficult to show reliability Relatively difficult to show validity
Closed-response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More uniformity across questions Relatively easy to answer Relatively easy to code Relatively easy to analyze Relatively easy to interpret Answers relatively objective Relatively easy to show reliability Relatively easy to show validity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrower range of possible answers Not so exploratory in nature Relatively difficult to write

I used both open-response and closed-response questions to find what problems the teacher and students had and how they dealt with them.

In the postal questionnaires, I asked the English teachers to give my questionnaires to their students and send them back to me by the home delivery service, so that I could get better

response rates. I also asked teachers to reassure the students that their questionnaire responses could be kept private by sealing the envelopes before returning them. This made the respondents feel secure in writing candidly.

Rossett's five types of basic question are listed in Brown (2001, p. 32): they are problem questions, priority questions, ability questions, attitude questions and solution questions. The purpose of problem questions is to identify learners' or teachers' problems in a given context. Questions about problems are highly structured and narrowly focused. Priority questions ask respondents to rank things in order of urgency. Ability questions are to do with abilities and language aptitude or proficiency; they can be answered by tests. Attitude questions are about participants' feelings, wishes and attitudes toward some subject or aspects of it. For the present research, attitude questions were essential. Solution questions ask for solutions to whatever problems have been perceived. I used attitude questions to find how students and teacher felt about their problems. I used problem questions to discover what students' and teachers' problems were felt in class. I also used solution questions, in order to find teachers' and students' strategies in dealing with their problems.

Four main methods of scaling in closed-response questions can be used, namely, the Bogardus for social distance, Thurstone for group differences and the Likert and Guttman scales for the hierarchical structure of attitudes (p. 188). To measure tolerance of ambiguity, for example, Likert scales can offer four response anchors, ranging, for example, from 'very patient', 'fairly patient' and 'reluctantly patient' to 'not patient at all'. Oppenheim (1996) lists some of the advantages of this type of question: the reliability of Likert scales tends to be an advantage because of the greater range of answers permitted to respondents. It is often

greater than that of the corresponding Thurstone scale; Likert scales will effectively separate people within the same group; provide more precise information about the respondents' degree of agreement or disagreement; and make it possible to include items whose apparent content is not obviously related to the attitude in question, enabling the subtler and deeper ramifications of an attitude to be explored (p. 200). One problem with Likert-scale questions, in Brown's view (2001), arises with "sit on the fence" answers. Respondents, notably those from certain cultures, tend to choose a neutral non-opinionated option and so it is sometimes wise not to offer this option.

Closed-response questions give uniformity across questions and yield specific data. The answers are easier than open-ended ones to code, analyze and interpret. Numerical analysis tends to confer reliability and validity. The disadvantages of such answers are that they provide a narrow range of possibilities, are less exploratory in nature and are difficult to write.

Open-response questions have two forms; fill-in questions and short-answer questions. Fill-in questions restrict what the respondents can produce. Short-answer questions require the respondents to write a few phrases or sentences and thus call for more detailed information from the respondents. I used open-response questions to find how the students perceived their problems and dealt with them, and I used closed-response questions to get general information about the participants. I could obtain this in detail through the use of short-answer questions.

Using postal questionnaires enabled me to gain a number of responses from Japanese students who were studying English at state and private universities in 11 Japanese prefectures. The

teachers for each class administered them. In addition, to get in-depth information, I used interviews and (non-participatory) classroom observation to find what teacher-student and student-student interaction there was.

3. 4 The process of data preparation, collection and analysis

From August to December 2005, I asked some of English teachers with whom I worked to distribute the questionnaires to their students in class. The English teachers were chosen at random from the list issued by JACET (The Japan Association of College English Teachers) issued in 2004. I sent questionnaires to 275 members of JACET. As they came from JACET and as the majority had many years' experience (see Table 5.5 in Chapter 5), I might have got different results if I had administered them to a group from a different organization and who had less experience. The timetable for data collection was as follows:

Class observation:

T4's class at a private university at 1:00 in the afternoon of April 23, 1999
T1's class at a state university at 10:40 in the morning of May 13 1999
T2's class at a state university at 10:40 in the morning of May 28 1999
T3's class at a private university at 1:00 in the afternoon of June 3 1999

Interviews:

S8 was interviewed at 2:50 on April 23, 1999 after class in a classroom
T4 was interviewed at 4:20 in the afternoon of April 23, 1999, after I had interviewed S8 in the classroom
T1 was interviewed at 4:10 on May 13, 1999 in the afternoon after I had interviewed S1, S2 and S3 in a classroom in his office. S1 was interviewed at 12:30, S2 was interviewed at 2:00 in the afternoon and S3 was interviewed at 3:00 in the afternoon in a classroom
T2 was interviewed at 12:50 in the afternoon of May 28, 1999 in his office
S4 was interviewed at 11:00 in the morning and S6 was interviewed at 1:00 in the afternoon on May 31, 1999, and S5 was interviewed at 1:00 in the afternoon on June 11, 1999 in a classroom
S7 was interviewed at 2:50 in the afternoon after class on June 3, 1999 in a classroom
T3 was interviewed at 4:20 in the afternoon on June 3, 1999 in a classroom

I observed classes at state universities and a private university at times which suited them and I also filmed them with a video camera. To begin with, I set up the video camera at one corner in front of the class; later on, I moved around with the video camera, so that I could record more of what the students said. I also wanted to film the students' interaction with their classmates and teacher. I used non-participant observation, choosing to film these classes because a video record is useful later on for viewing the visible inter- and intra-relationships between teacher and student and among students. I also used unstructured observation in order to find out what was happening among these students in the natural setting of their classroom. All the teachers and students agreed to be interviewed and to have their interviews tape-recorded.

The interviews were either semi-structured or unstructured, depending on what had happened in their class. The questions in the semi-structured interviews were both open-ended and closed-ended, to gain a wide range of information from teachers and students. Unstructured questions prompted by class observations were added, so that I could get deeper information related to invisible intra-relationships.

In February, 2002, I finished transcribing all the teachers' and students' interviews into English except those involving T1 (a Canadian English teacher) who teaches at a national university and T3 (a British-Canadian English part-time teacher) who teaches at a private university. Their interviews were in English. I tried to quote extracts from the interviews which related directly to my research aims.

For the questionnaire, I piloted samples of the questions from May 2004 to February 2005 at

JALT and JACET conferences and I also emailed English teachers whom I knew. There I asked some teachers of English to give feedback on my questionnaire questions; they responded at once or else they sent their comments later. One of them asked her students to answer my questionnaire questions at her college and gave me their feedback as well. The feedback displayed a degree of ambiguity in some of the Japanese sentences, so I adjusted them so that Japanese university students understood clearly. I also piloted the questions to be given to the students give in classes which were taught by part-time English teachers. I mailed the questions for the teachers to some of the members of JALT, LET and JACET, marking them in different colours at the corner of the questionnaires so that I could find out which organization the respondents belonged to. I found that some Japanese English teachers whose major is not TESOL or TESL had difficulties understanding some of the questions that were written in English. Some English teachers suggested that I should write bilingual questions in the questionnaire so that teachers and the students could understand them better. Later, I decided to choose English teachers whose major is TESOL or TESL in order to get better responses. Some of them encouraged my study because they themselves were struggling to teach low-level and unmotivated Japanese university students. They hoped that I could find strategies which would solve their problems. I was very encouraged by these Japanese English teachers.

From August to December 2005, I asked some of the English teachers with whom I worked to distribute the questionnaires to their students in class. The English teachers were chosen at random from the list issued by JACET (The Japan Association of College English Teachers) issued in 2004. I sent questionnaires to 275 members of JACET. As they came from JACET and as the majority had many years' experience (see Table 5.5 in Chapter 5), I might

have different results from a group, from a different organization and who had less experience.

For the students' questionnaire questions, I explained to the English teachers with whom I worked my aims for this study and they voluntarily participated in and administered these questionnaires to their students. I sent all the questionnaires to students in 11 prefectures by the home delivery system and later I sent a small "Thank-you" present to each teacher. The videos, interviews and questionnaires are available in my office for research purposes¹.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter we have looked at the main forms of data collection used in this study. We have seen that there are many different techniques for gathering data, and that each technique has advantages and disadvantages, so a researcher should choose them in combination to gather the best possible data for her/his purposes.

In Part 1 of my study I used classroom observation with video and tape-recorded semi-structured/unstructured interviews to gain in-depth knowledge of what was going on, in terms of teacher and student interaction in the classroom. Non-participant observation was, I found, useful for investigating group activities impartially in natural classroom conditions. It was helpful for watching the visible inter- and intra-relations between teacher and students, student and student. As for the interviews, they gave a deeper insight into the students' and teachers' written replies and more insights into observed inter- and intra-relations.

In Part 2 of the study I used a postal questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions to provide more quantitative answers to my research questions. I used both space and methodological triangulation throughout the study.

In the next chapter, I analyse the classroom observations and interviews in order to find what problems there are in Japanese EFL classrooms and to attempt to answer the main theoretical research questions: 1) What kind of visible and invisible inter-member relations exist between Japanese university students in the language classroom and how do they affect their learning? 2) How does the teacher's behaviour affect the students' behaviour, and what impact does it have on their learning? 3) How might co-operative methods benefit the learning of English in Japanese university language classrooms? and 4) How do Japanese university students feel at present about the interaction in Japanese EFL classrooms?

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS 1: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, my aim is to find what kinds of visible and invisible inter-and intra-member relations exist between Japanese university students in various language classrooms, and how they affected their learning of English. My second aim is to identify how the teacher's behaviour affected the students' behaviour, and to assess the impact that it had on their learning. In this Part of the study I observed four Japanese university EFL classrooms and interviewed the four teachers of these classes and eight of their students.

I begin (in section 4.2) by saying what language classrooms are. I then go on to explain why I chose to focus on both state and private universities (section 4.3). In the main body of the chapter (sections 4.3. and 4.4) I discuss the findings for each class, concentrating first on the observation session and then on the interviews. I then draw a number of conclusions (section 4.5) with respect to the types of classroom interaction and the areas of conflict discovered in each class.

4.2 Language classrooms

A language classroom is a controlled learning and teaching environment, which exhibits visible inter- and intra-relations, where the teacher or group leader interacts with the diversity of students to advance the students' skills and knowledge. It is a pedagogical as well as a

social place for the participants, i.e., the teacher and the students. Each classroom has its own dynamics and rules for the teacher and the groups of students to keep.

…the interactive dynamics which emerge in each classroom give rise to a social reality which is specific to that classroom, and which pulls participants in a certain direction (Tudor, 2001, p. 128).

In a language class, there is physical, verbal, non-verbal and emotional interaction between the students and the teacher. It has been argued that researchers into second language acquisition who study input must consider learners of English as active participants in the acquisition process, remembering that each learner has his or her own input preferences (Beebe, 1985, p. 404). Beebe claims that learners are also affected by solidarity, ethnocentrism, intergroup dynamics and feelings of identification, loyalty and social identity. She has also looked at children's preferences for the type of language modelling they prefer to hear when learning a second language. Her studies have found that, in general, they prefer to learn from each other, rather than from the teacher (p. 405). Beebe's findings are often echoed in classrooms in Japan. Although her research focuses on children, it seems that among Japanese university students, too, the influence of the ethnic group on a student is often greater than that of her/his peers. Students in these classrooms use the textbook which the English teacher chooses; this tends to contain conversational dialogues. In my experience, when students model these dialogues, the rest of the students generally want to listen to them, because the students' pronunciation is easier to understand than that of a native speaker of English. Some Japanese students even appear to feel relieved when they compare their poor pronunciation with that of their classmates; they are apt to enjoy doing this. For example, people sometimes prefer to use a peculiar accent or pronunciation which shows their own ethnic group, and do not speak as their surrounding social group does. The speech of

friends and a high level of contact with native speakers of the language also influence model preferences. The choice of preferred models is naturally influenced by the feelings and motivations behind the preference. These two factors may also influence the way in which languages are learned in the classroom.

In many Japanese classroom settings, learners practise the language through daily interactions with native speakers but also with other learners, who may have communication problems. To solve such miscommunication, negotiation is often required. Negotiated communication includes the negotiation of form and meaning, which are always intertwined. Several factors affect the type of negotiation which takes place. These are the task type (problem-solving and debating), background knowledge and status differences, familiarity and gender (Gass, 1997, pp. 117-126). Another factor is group membership. Beebe claims that second language acquisition involves linguistic and cultural group boundaries; the concept of membership is especially necessary for looking at the intergroup and interpersonal dynamics (1985, p. 412) and these factors can inhibit the frequent negotiations which keep conversation going and lead to a breakdown in the interaction between dyads or group members. Gass summarizes the roles of interaction in second language acquisition in her model of input interaction and output: 1) as a means of drawing attention to linguistic form, making it salient and creating a readiness for learning; and 2) as a facilitator of learning (1997, p. 131). We see that interaction is thus one of the key elements which enable students to learn the target language in the classroom. It is therefore important to observe how the students and the teacher interact in class when teaching or learning a language. In groups, teacher and student, student and student try to negotiate in order to carry out the tasks and to keep the necessary cohesiveness that will allow them to work together. Thus the various people in the

classroom have goals and interact to achieve them, developing their social-emotional skills in the process (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001, p. 30).

In theory, the classroom with the highest degree of groupness in its goals would have small groups of students working on subject-matter projects (task-group); individuals working alone, but in parallel situations, on skill development (task-individual); discussions in which group expectations and feelings were made public (social emotional-groups); and informal relationships of warmth and security that are satisfying to the individual students (social-emotional-individual). (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001, p. 32).

In many Japanese language classrooms, the teachers have a significant influence on the students because they are authoritative figures. If a teacher becomes a friend to those students who are not accepted by their peers and to those students who are slow learners, they may be able to promote more appreciation for individual differences and a more relaxed group atmosphere (p. 32).

As mentioned earlier, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Culture encourages two-way communication in the classroom as a contribution to making Japan competitive with other nations (the “Action Plan”, 2003). To promote learning and teaching in the classroom, it is understood that interaction will play a major role for teachers and students. Thus one would hope to see evidence of the sort of positive interaction taking place in Japanese language classrooms that would facilitate learning. One of the aims of this thesis is to examine the nature of interaction in these classrooms and to assess how it contributes to language learning.

In the following sections, I describe how I observed in specific classrooms the influence of language learning on the interaction between teacher and student and student and student. In

order to capture students with a range of abilities and attitudes I observed four classes: two from a state university, and two from a private university,

I used a video camera to record interaction patterns. I then interviewed the teachers about their classes in order to find why they had behaved as they had and finally interviewed students from each class to gauge their opinions. The observations made and the findings from the interviews are reported below.

4.3 Interaction and inter- and intra-relationships in language classrooms at state universities and private universities

In Japan, there are both state and private universities, and the language abilities and motivation of the students who attend state universities tend to be better than those going to the private universities. Many private universities also hold a center examination at their universities and use the scores from it as well for a certain number of students. However, some private universities only require the applicants to take only the latter. Students applying to the state universities are required to take two entrance examinations, first, one which is administered by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations, and second, one administered by the university in which they wish to enroll. Applicants who want to study at a private university take only the latter. Therefore, I observed classes in both types of university in order to learn more about different conditions for the inter- and intra-relations between teachers and students and students with one another in the classroom.

4.3.1 State university class 1

In this section, I describe the state university classroom which I observed to learn how its

full-time Canadian teacher taught, and how the medical and dental students learned with their classmates and with the teacher. The teacher was teaching English III (Speaking and Listening).

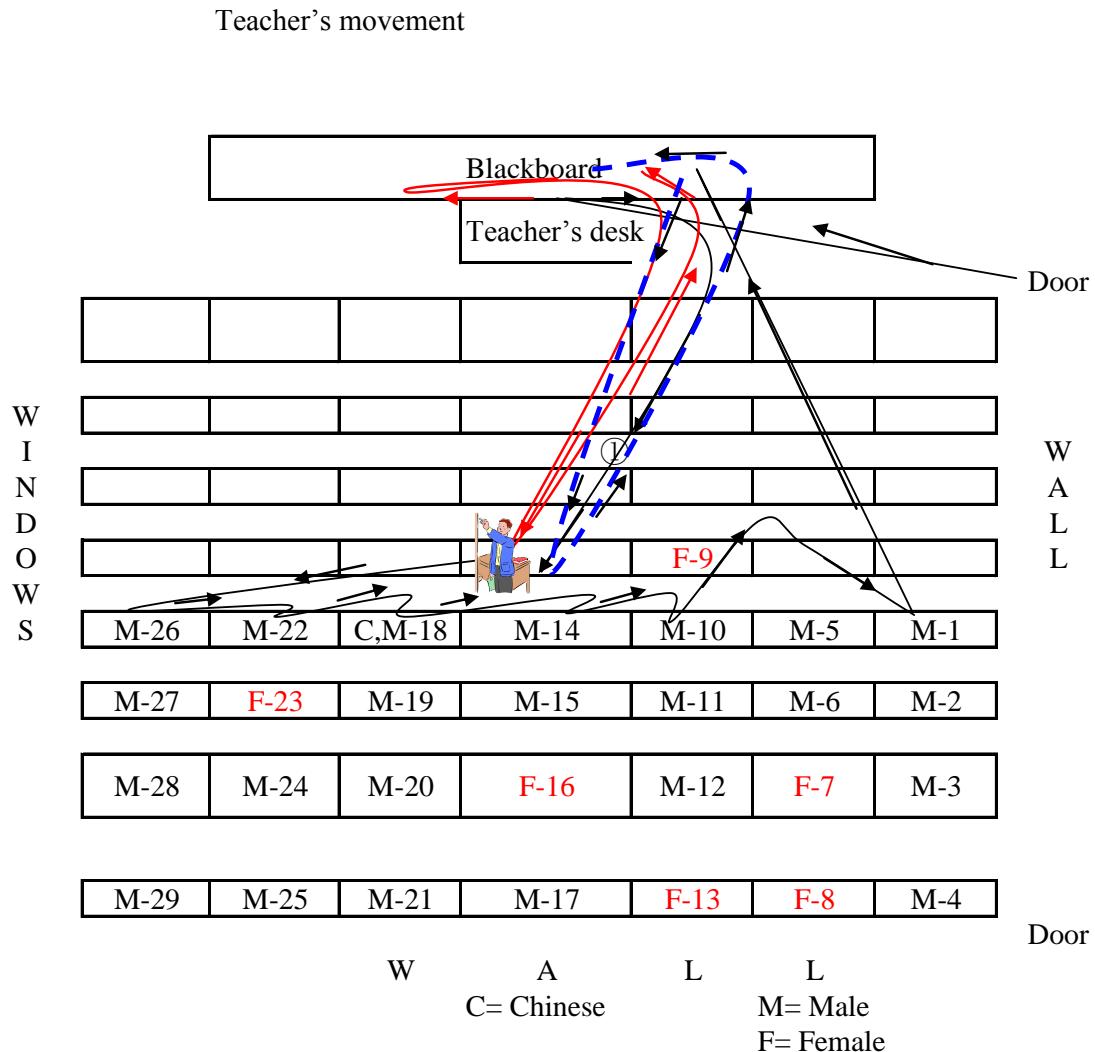
4.3.2 Observation of class 1

In this class, there were 23 male and 6 female Japanese students, and one Chinese male student. The teacher (a male) divided the class into small groups and taught the lesson in two parts. During the first part, the teacher explained what the students had to do and, in the second, saw how they had tackled it. The topic was ‘university education’ and the students listened to him carefully. The students obtained information from the task sheets issued to each member of their group and during Part II, small groups of them discussed the differences between Japanese and American universities. This class continued for 90 minutes. The teacher continually instructed the students in ways to tackle the tasks and the group leaders asked their groups the questions written in the sheets.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate how the classroom was arranged and shows the seating map for Part I and Part II: they also trace the path used by the teacher when he monitored the students.

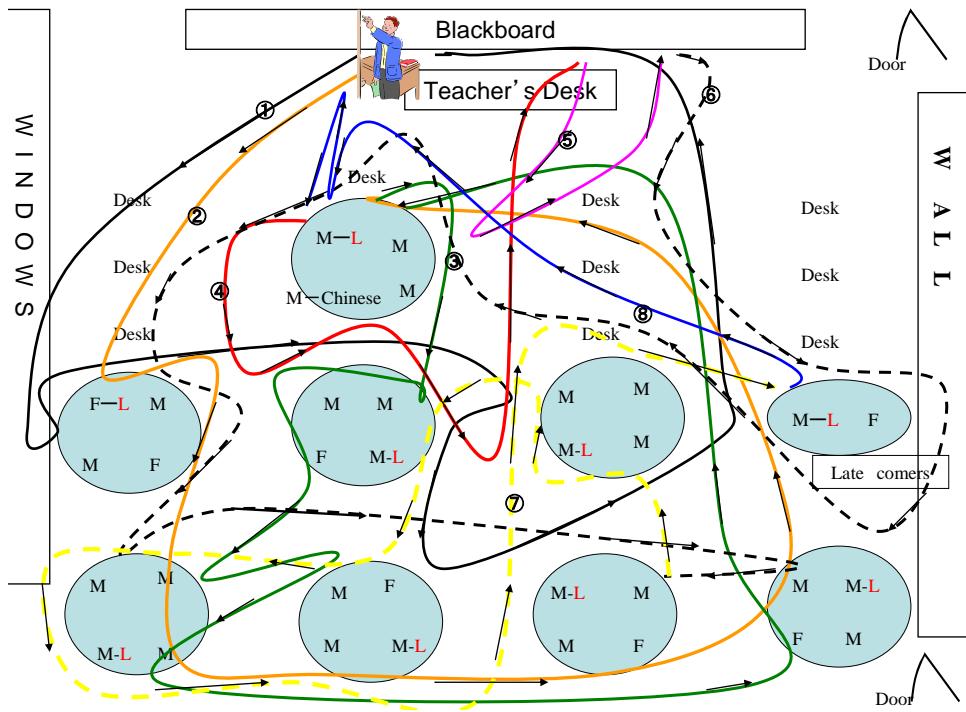
Figure 4.3 is a running log showing what was happening at different stages of the lesson.

Figure 4.1 Chart showing the teacher's movement during the first 37 minutes of the class



As Figure 4.3 shows, the teacher did not say anything when some students came late to class or went out of the classroom. It is very common in Japanese universities for some students to come late to class, sometimes making teachers repeat the same things, and thus holding up the teaching and learning process. Some of these students took their seats noisily and interrupted their peers in order to ask what the teacher had already said. They surely affected the group dynamics of the class. However, this teacher chose to ignore the latecomers and thus further interrupt the flow of the class.

Figure 4.2 Chart showing the teacher's movement during the final 53 minutes of the class



In Figure 4.2, letter L stands for the group leaders (see Chapter 2), letter M for a male student and letter F for a female student. The black line represents the teacher's first monitoring movement (No. 1), the orange line shows his second movement (No. 2), the green line his third movement (No. 3), the red line his fourth (No. 4), the pink line his fifth (No. 5), the dotted black line his sixth (No. 6), the dotted yellow line his seventh (No. 7) and the blue line, finally, his eighth (No. 8).

The layout of this classroom was typical of a traditional classroom in Japan. The windows were on one side and a wall was on the other, with a front door and a back door located at each end of the wall. There was a blackboard and a teacher's desk on a platform above the level of the students' desks. However, it was unusual in having movable desks and chairs for the students.

The classroom arrangement and equipment has some influence on learning and teaching. The difficulty in most Japanese classrooms, is that chairs and desks are usually attached to the floor, making it difficult to sit in groups and in turn making it difficult for teachers to interact with students during class. Edge points out that shifts from interaction between the teacher and the whole class to interaction between the students themselves (either in pairs or groups) is the most usual pattern of interaction in modern ELT (Edge, 1993, p. 69).

The students in the first class that I observed were divided into 8 groups of 4 students and one pair. The pair was made up of the two students who came to class late. The teacher used his own materials rather than a textbook. In his interview (see below), he told me why he did not like to use the published textbooks which were available to him. He said that the content of the textbooks was too easy and seemed to insult Japanese university students, practising greetings, daily routines and simple activities. Japanese university students, he said, had already learned this type of English in junior high school. As his students were mature and serious about learning English, he made his own teaching materials, which he thought more suitable for his students' language level. Figure 4.3 shows the teaching timeline taught by the Canadian English teacher at 10:40 in the morning on 13th May, 1999, very soon after the beginning of the academic year (in Japan, this begins in April and ends in March). I observed the class with the teacher's permission. On the same day, after the class observation, I interviewed this teacher and 3 students (whose permission I also obtained). I interviewed them one by one at an agreed time.

Figure4.3 The timeline in the class taught by the Canadian English teacher

Time	Teacher	Individual Students	Groups of students
0:00:00	Coming into the classroom and reminding them about the quiz to be given next week. Taking attendance, calling students' first names.	Each student answers by saying "Yes" in Japanese or English, raising one hand.	Students welcome the researcher with applause.
0:02:01	Introducing the researcher with the video camera	The researcher introduce herself in Japanese and English.	They seem to accept her well. They do not show any objection to or irritation at her presence.
0:04:00	Teacher explains the day's tasks, which are about university education in general in Japan and North America. Distributes the answer sheets and explains the tasks using the blackboard. Part I: 1) Asking questions; 2) Answer questions; 3) Expand; 4) Feedback; and 5) Disagree politely		Students look at the sheets or chat with their classmates.
0:05:40	Talks about the role of the group leader in order to get opinions from the whole class.		
0:09:43			Students move desks and chairs to form groups.
0:11:10		One female student sits by herself. Another female student invites her to do the tasks together as a group. She is the group leader for this group, which eventually consists of two female and two male students.	
0:16:48	Monitoring and asking questions Teacher does not say anything to her.	One female student comes late for the class and one of the female students tells her what they are doing.	There are nine groups.
0:17:46	Teacher does not say anything to him.	One male student comes late for the class.	
0:10:49	Teacher does not say anything to him.	One male student goes out of the classroom. He comes back at 0:34:58 and rejoins his group, where he resumes.	
0:23:08	Teacher does not say anything to him.	Each group leader presents a report in turn. 1) How much does it cost? 2) Who makes the payment? 3) What is the age range of the students? 4) How often do students use the library? Does it open in the evenings or mornings, weekends Sundays? 5) When does it close? 6) How can students get high marks? 7) How would you describe the teaching style?	
0:36:40	Teacher stops the students who are still doing the tasks and asks them to report what they have done.		
	Part II Suggestion Box: discussion. He writes on the board and explain points of grammar, such as subjunctive sentences: 'If you could..., why would you change? 1) Logistical change: classroom conditions, wall. 2) Academic change: credits system, required/optinal subjects.		The atmosphere within the groups becomes friendlier.
0:53:40	He speaks English at normal speed.	The Chinese student talks at length with the leader of his groups, obliging the remaining two Japanese students to listen.	Students become more communicative, sharing ideas than Part I. Group leaders report back on the discussions in their groups.
	Students will discuss two kinds of changes till 11:45 and teacher starts his monitoring. He advises going on to the academic questions.		
1:02:21			The members of this group seem not to understand the meaning of "academic suggestion".
1:10:52	He stops group work by clapping his hands. He gives students 2 minutes to prepare and practise so that group leaders can report.		
1:14:29	He introduces the sentence, "We would like to suggest ...", when leaders report. Teacher writes what each leader reports on the blackboard.	Each leader reports when the teacher calls his/her name.	
1:22:00	Teacher gives his comments		Students look at their teacher and listen to him.
1:26:33	He informs the class about the quiz next week and the class is over.		

The recording shows that the teacher spent 8 minutes giving instructions for the first task and then the students broke up into small groups. This took 2 minutes and they began work on the task after they had decided on their group leaders. While they were forming groups, one female student stood up to look for a group to join and then went back to her seat without

finding one. A second female student looked around her classmates for a while and noticed that the first female student was sitting by herself. She invited her over and together they were joined by two male students. This group sat by the windows and worked quietly, but the female leader had difficulty in persuading the other members to speak. She explained in Japanese how to do the task, but they were very quiet and did not seem to be very interested in it. There was very little interaction in this group; it remained quiet and three of its members did not seem to be enjoying the task. They had become members of this group not by choice but unwillingly, having to form a group after the rest of the class had already formed theirs. These quiet students may have felt fear of the unknown group members, possibly experiencing anxiety and rivalry at first. They needed time to get to know each other to establish positive inter-member relations. The female group leader did not ask the teacher for help for the group to do the task and the teacher did not try to help this group because they never asked for any advice about sharing information, opinions or ideas for carrying out the task. Instead, some of them were merely slumped over their desks.

This group appears to have had negative inter-member relations. The female group leader asked one question after another, but nobody answered. No interaction among its members could be seen for some time, so the leader looked around at other groups to see what they were doing. As she encouraged the other members of her group, they started to answer the questions. The students in the other groups laughed, smiled, shared their answers and spoke to one another in Japanese or English. All the other groups were engaged in the task, writing down the answers, or showing agreement by nodding, but this group remained quieter than the other groups, showing little interest. However, as time went by, this female student laughed and initiated a discussion. The problem with this group may have been that it had

not had time to form properly, and that it had thus not passed what Tuckman calls the stage of 'forming', in the group formation process. The members of this group did not introduce themselves nor smile at all. They seemed to have some anxiety and fear of unknown members from the beginning.

In eight of the groups, the students undertook the tasks as a group and interacted with the other group members in both English and Japanese. They tried to write the answers on the sheets. These students interacted well in learning the target language. They accepted one another and co-operated in doing the tasks, establishing positive relations with the rest of the group.

In one all-male group, there was a Chinese student who spoke better English than everyone else; he decided without consultation that the group leader should be one of the Japanese students, but a different Japanese student immediately took over the leadership and then one of the other Japanese students took over. One of the group members seldom spoke in English, but he did listen to the rest. He could not join the discussion in English and he had negative inter-member relations. Either this student was envious of the Chinese student and the group leader, or he felt that they were ignoring him, or else he felt inferior. As time went by, he complained that it was only these two students who were interacting much of the time and that the group leader was failing to give the other members a chance to speak. The teacher said, when I interviewed him (see below), that he did not notice this at all while he was monitoring the classroom. As this teacher monitored the students, he tried to withdraw students from their groups if they were interrupting, or were thinking but not participating, doing their tasks or speaking. This was why he did not interact with them while he was

monitoring. However, he could have encouraged the quiet students to join in doing the tasks when the group leader had difficulty in making the other group members join the discussion. As Schmuck and Schmuck call upon teachers to develop interpersonal and conflict-resolution skills in their students (2001, p. 26), this teacher perhaps needs to develop these skills, to improve the learning in his classes. These quiet students may need to build a sense of trust in others because peer-group life plays a vital part in everyone's developing a self-concept, perhaps such students in particular (p. 26).

According to Figure 4.3, when about 36 minutes had passed, this teacher asked the group leaders to report what the groups had discussed. As the group leaders had been selected by the members of the groups, they were usually the ones who were good at English. Japanese students seldom volunteer to be leaders in a language classroom in Japan, but the other members of the groups depend on them to carry out the tasks. When they do, the other members do not have to speak English to the whole class or do their tasks alone. These dependent students may even copy the answers from their peers. However, when only the group leaders report the results, this gives the other members of the group no chance to practise speaking English. As a result, they cannot not improve by practice, though this class was meant to teach speaking and listening. There must be some way to deal with this situation and give opportunities to all students to speak English; the teacher should offer all students the chance to do so. One way to do this might be to assign specific roles to all the students. Role assignment has positive effects because it gives the students security and saves time even if the roles are ones which the students may not like. It encourages interpersonal management and adjusting to one another (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p. 119). Though there are some problems – role ambiguity, role conflict, role distance and role strain –

there are also some useful roles for students to take: facilitator, encourager, harmoniser, recorder/reporter, summariser, checker, resource person, information-getter and time-keeper (p. 120). Cohen lists three ways for students to perform their roles effectively: 1) Make the assignment of the roles such that everybody knows who is ‘officially’ in charge of what; 2) Accompany the roles with specific ‘job descriptions’; 3) Make sure that everybody is clear about what each role player is supposed to do (1994, p. 96). In this class, none of the three items on Cohen’s list were heeded. The only ones who were assigned a role were the group leaders. The other students knew that their group leaders were officially in charge of getting the tasks completed. No job descriptions of any roles were given. The students simply formed groups and chose their own group leaders.

During Part II of this class, the student who had complained earlier now joined the discussion and spoke more than before, about where he lived and how he commuted by train. The four students in this group did the tasks together after the group leader had apologized and given everybody in the group a chance to speak; then it was clear that they had accepted one another. They appeared to have accepted the diversity of the group members and had succeeded in developing positive inter-member relations.

In the group located by the wall, the students interacted cheerfully, possibly because they had a cheerful group leader. He seemed to be interested in being videotaped by the researcher. The members interacted well with his leadership and he certainly seemed to have a positive influence on the other members of the group. The behaviour of this group leader and his group shows that a group leader can have a positive affect on the learning in his or her group.

Group leaders also had an immense influence on the members of the groups. This group leader appeared to have a positive effect on the learning process.

According to Dörnyei and Murphey (2003, p. 113), there are two types of role for student leaders to assume in carrying out tasks or supporting members in the group: 1) they can be task-specialists and 2) they can exercise socio-emotional skills. Group leaders who work as task-specialists try to encourage group members to achieve the group's goals, giving orders, criticizing or stopping members from doing something. This may be an unpleasant role for some group leaders, because members may criticise them. If they are group leaders because of their socio-emotional skills, they are more likely to act as peacekeepers in order to maintain harmony within the group when conflict arises or to maintain cohesiveness among group members. Maintaining cohesiveness is a key factor in helping groups to achieve their tasks. The leader in the group described above tried to maintain harmony within the group, being a task specialist and also having socio-emotional skills.

The teacher distributed the answer sheets about North American universities. The students filled out the answers in the same groups. The teacher walked back and forth from the blackboard and to the students' desks. No students at all sat in the first three rows. The teacher walked and stood close to the students and, speaking slowly, gave some instructions for the task in English. The tasks for the students were: 1) to ask questions about Japanese and American universities, 2) to answer questions about the differences between Japanese and American universities, 3) to expand on the day's topic, not only answering the question but giving their own opinion or experiences, 4) to give feedback about the group members' opinions, and 5) to politely disagree when necessary. The teacher gave two or three tasks to

the group leaders, calling for opinions from everyone in the groups. If some group members were quiet, he suggested that group leaders should say, “What do you think, Hiroshi?” In this way, the group leaders elicited everybody’s opinions. It might perhaps have been even better, however, if the members of the group had been allocated particular roles. This would have stopped them from relying solely on the group leader and they would have had to do something for themselves. Because of the absence of such roles the students may not have learned anything, spoken much English, or listened to much English.

After the students had worked on this for twenty minutes, the teacher stopped the “Question and Answer” activity, asked the students to identify the differences between Japanese and North American universities and let group leaders report on their discussion. The questions they were asked were: “How much does it cost?”, “Who usually pays?”, “What is the age range of the students?”, “How often do the students use the library?”, “Is the library open in the evenings or mornings, and at weekends or on Sundays?” “When do the libraries close?” “How do students get high marks?” “How would you describe the teaching style?”

For 15 minutes, the students had to discuss two kinds of change, i.e. logistical change and academic change, in relation to their university. For example, “What changes would you make?” “Why would you change...?” “If I could, I would...” etc. Students had to use the conditional mode.

When 15 minutes had passed, the teacher asked each group leader to list his/her group’s suggestions one by one. One of the group leaders gave candid feedback about this task. He said “Having only 15 minutes for this task is too short and the task is very, very hard.” The

teacher did not make any comment on his feedback, however. After all the group leaders had finished reporting, the teacher informed the students about the quiz which would be given the following week and the class ended.

During this task, the students talked cheerfully, shared their opinions and thoughts with their groups and wrote down their answers on the sheets. They showed commitment to doing the task together. They talked face-to-face or listened to what other students said. According to Schmuck and Schmuck, face-to-face interaction is very important in promoting learning.

A group may be defined as a collection of interacting people with some reciprocal influence over one another...Frequent face-to-face communication is the bedrock of such mutual exchanges (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001, p. 29).

As we can see from the chart, the teacher in this classroom did not appear to monitor each group with a view to learning what problems students had and to help or if necessary resolve their conflicts. The teacher could also have listened to individual students as a facilitator in his monitoring:

The teacher's influence on the group's developing climate is most critical. Of all the times during the year that the teacher is influential, the first few days of class are most critical (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, p. 48).

In this state university class, there appeared to be a number of different visible inter-and intra-relationships in play among the groups and group members. Some students spoke in a low voice, looking down when they spoke, or stayed silent when a group leader asked a question. Other students appeared to willingly share their thoughts or opinions and listened to others carefully before giving feedback. This attitude seems to show that they have inter-member acceptance. They tried to cooperate to find the answers. They laughed and

talked a good deal with their group members as a unified group. They seemed to have established the process of group formation. One of the significant ways of interaction in this class was that the stronger speakers said a great deal and the weaker ones listened to them. When students fail to accept other members of the group and the help they can offer, they have a difficult time in solving problems by themselves as they arise. Such students tend to be silent or rarely laugh together. Individual differences influence group dynamics.

...the vision teachers have in mind when planning a class may differ to a greater or lesser degree from what their students will perceive and therefore be experiencing in the very same class. The reality of classroom learning is not, therefore, simply what the teacher plans, nor can it necessarily be predicted from the inner logic of a given activity or set of materials (Tudor, 1998, p. 321).

In a language class, the teacher is the leader for the class group and influences the group climate. However, this English teacher did not appear to be an authoritarian teacher and did not interact with students enough during group work. Instead he walked around among the groups and seemed to withdraw himself from contact with the students. For language learning, however, co-operation between teacher and students is important because it enhances learning. If this teacher had been sensitive to students who were struggling to learn or accept the other members in their group, they might have developed more positive inter-member relations. If a teacher takes care to put students into groups which take account of the students' language level and personality, the weak or quiet students will find it easier to co-operate when doing the tasks. Thus the teacher's personality can have a great deal of influence on the development of the group and the ability of students to establish a sense of trust in others.

Each group had some purpose or goal for being together, and produced physical, verbal,

nonverbal and emotional interaction. However, in the quiet group which I observed, some members did not seem to have enough commitment to the other members to do the task with them. These students displayed a negative attitude by being silent or ignoring other members in the group. If this teacher had been an empathic listener, he might have been better able to motivate the students. In fact, while he monitored, he seldom talked to the students, but observed what they did from a distance or listened to what they said. If students accept the diversity in their group, it is easier for them to learn the target language. Peers can be influential in shaping classroom group processes (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, p. 27) because they can help other students by giving emotional support and correcting one another's attitudes, values, aspirations, and social behaviour (p. 27). For students, it is often easier to accept advice, opinions and different thoughts from their peers than from teachers.

4.3.3 Interview with the teacher of class 1

As part of the follow-up to this observation, I interviewed the class teacher. He was a Canadian English teacher whose native language was English. He also spoke Cantonese but did not read it at all. He had lived in Japan for 10 years and held a Master's degree in Education and a TEFL certificate; now he was a doctoral candidate in Education. He had taught English for 13 years. He could speak Japanese at intermediate level. When he taught English, he usually spoke in English and his teaching methodology was to use student-centred communicative methods with his group work, which was content-based, conversation-based, language-based and took into account English for special purposes.

This teacher mentioned that his classroom equipment and situation were poor but had one advantage: the desks were not nailed on the floor and the chairs were free-standing. He

preferred to be on the level of the platform. He was happy that this room had a good quality basic audio system.

I interviewed this teacher at 4:10 in the afternoon on 13th May, 1999 in his office and I tape-recorded this interview with his permission. He responded to my question about the seating arrangement by saying, "That's always like that, you know. In all my classes, they sat at the back. For some classes, the first day, they sat at the front. Other days, just depending on my mood, I will be the one that moves to the back of the class. It doesn't really matter either way." From this response, we know that Japanese university students tend to sit at the back of the classroom and teacher walks up to them during class. Hartog argues that seating location determines the level of teacher attention and interaction (1994, pp. 53-55) because a teacher tends to direct questions to the students sitting in the front of the classroom and judge them more positively than those who are sitting at the rear. When he was asking questions and interacting with his students, this teacher moved around to all of them in order to assess them.

I use the abbreviations T1 for the Canadian English teacher in this interview and I for myself.

I: "What do you do if learners do not understand your questions?"

T1: Generally I do not ask questions in class or I manage the class like today. When I have a question, they have already prepared for the question and the group leaders, they could, they knew they are responsible for answering the questions. So I generally do not ask questions in class.

Here, the teacher clearly depended on group leaders to complete the tasks. He used group leaders as task-specialists and he did not try to interact with students. He seemed to isolate himself from them. His attitude seems to contradict Malamah-Thomas' (1986) claim that interaction occurs reciprocally between teacher and students and that they influence and

adjust to each other.

The teacher acts upon the class, but the class reaction subsequently modifies his next action, and so on. The class reaction becomes in itself an action, evoking a reaction in the teacher, which influences his subsequent action. There is a constant pattern of mutual influence and adjustment (p. 3).

In this teacher's case, he did not interact with the students; even though seating the group in a circle or cluster is believed to promote interaction and classroom participation among students, it probably only increases the teacher's support for the students but not his interaction with them. This teacher seemed to avoid interacting with any individual students when he was monitoring, though the seating arrangements gave him the opportunity to do so. Edge (1993) claims that there are five kinds of interaction in the language classroom: 1) the teacher gives instructions to the whole class; 2) the teacher gives instructions to an individual; 3) the teacher exchanges conversation with the whole class; 4) the teacher tells one student to say something to another; 5) students communicate directly with each other (p. 69). Edge emphasizes that using language in different interactions is as important to language learning as studying different forms of language (p. 69).

Then I asked him.

I: "How about this one? What do you do when learners do not understand the activities?"

T1: Ah, actually that does not happen very often because I am, am used to explaining things in the way they can understand. If, but, of course, I mean, I'm not perfect, obviously, so it does happen. So, uhm, I will either explain again, sometimes I will explain in Japanese, um, uh, usually there are students who do understand and sometimes I notice them. Quietly I explain it to the students who don't understand.

I: Yeah, today, two boys didn't understand, what you just said. They didn't ask you any questions and they just ...uh, they try not...they did not participate at some point.

T1: Um.

I: And I thought they did not understand what you said. But they were in groups

so they were there.

T1: Um, um (silence) Yeah, I mean, that's, ah, surely, this going to be sometimes, when, when the fact that the students don't understand, scares me, I don't, I don't notice and this is really, my responsibility, which is, I guess, it's my own negligence. Ah, I should've tried to address that. You're right.

The teacher thus admitted that he had not noticed that two male students had not understood the activity, and that he had not explained what to do or helped them. If he had helped, they might have felt more motivated. For example, if he had monitored the class from the teacher's podium, he would have been able to oversee the whole classroom and know which groups were actively at work and which were not. He would have been able to help the groups by talking with them or asking questions as he monitored. In doing so, he could perhaps have built a better rapport with students and been a more supportive teacher. As a result, these two university students would perhaps have felt that that they had experienced good cooperation in their group, and they would have wanted to learn more.

The next question was "What did you do with the students who didn't participate in class?"

T1: Uhm, that's a good question! That's a very good question! Today, I tried to go around to each group. That's what I normally would do. Uh, sometimes I will say nothing, just sort of feel my presence to, to feel some sort of pressure to do something to write, something on the paper to, to, have some spoken English I will put. But in terms of singling out an individual student, I did nothing today and the only time I do if they're sleeping or they have their head on the desk, squeeze their shoulders and I'll ask them what time you went to bed last night or something. I'll try to nod [not clear what he said at all]...But I don't think it's productive to singling out students for some sort of, uh, nonparticipation because I think number one, they won't really understand why I'm doing it. Because they, uh, number two, I could make a mistake. The students could simply be, uh, speaking English when I think I am speaking Japanese – which has happened before – and I worried about that. They may be angry with me perhaps, and not participate as well. So, I am really careful about doing something, as you say, about students.

Here, it is clear that the teacher had had a bad experience and as a result had apparently withdrawn himself from interacting with his students in his monitoring. Ehrman and

Dörnyei (1998) list three characteristics of successful leaders: 1) goal-related/task-relevant abilities and skills, 2) sociability (i.e., interpersonal skills to relate effectively to others), and 3) motivation to be a leader (p. 165). In this case, this teacher may lack sociability and the motivation to be a leader. If he could have overcome his bad experience, which was well in the past, he could perhaps have been a good leader and a facilitator. Lack of confidence may be one reason why he did not interact successfully with the students.

The interview proceeded as follows.

I: OK. How did you control power conflict in the group if it's there?

T1: As I said this morning, eh, eh, each week I encourage them to, ah, make groups with different members, ah, generally I don't focus on power conflicts and perhaps, I should. But I didn't...I don't really do much about that because ah, it's sort of a 90-minute class, ah (not clearly) hopefully, that, that conflict won't happen again. But I do notice some students not, not so much here but – I don't know, the other place I teach, um, sometimes when someone who is a year ahead or repeaters or something like that, they will, ah, they won't join the groups very easily. Sometimes I have to, sort of, put them in groups and encourage them. As far as power problems, I don't really address that very much.

I: But actually, ah, one of the groups, ah, I mentioned about you, ah, H and a Chinese boy, they talked a lot and the two boys were there and the boy sat next to H, I don't know his name, he complained about, saying, "You, two are only talking!"

T1: Oh, he actually said that?

I: Yeah, and the other boy, ah, he wore glasses.

T1: So he actually said something to them!

I: Uhm. I mean to H.

T1: To H. I see. He said it to him in Japanese!

I: Yeah, yeah.

T1: Hum.

I: That was in the first part. In the second activity, these two spoke.

T1: Oh, good.

I: I was very happy to see that. And they told their opinions.

T1: Oh, good!

This teacher did not give the reasons why he did not pay attention to power-conflict but he seemed to be happy to know that these students had finally solved their problems and joined the activity. In fact, he was surprised to know that there had been a power conflict that day.

From the interview, I surmised that his strategy for dealing with the power conflict was to form different groups each session with different members. However, good group dynamics do not result automatically from dividing students into groups. Figure 2.5 in Chapter 2 shows the individual behaviour in the invisible group; students in groups go through anxiety, fear of the unknown, conflict and competition. It takes time to develop positive intermember relations and for individual members to accept other members of the group. So, the teacher as a classroom leader should observe students and offer help if they need it. This is one of the teacher's roles in class, as students admit the teacher's leadership and authority. Being a good facilitator, a teacher who listens empathically promotes learning and students will develop interpersonal trust and work cooperatively to carry out the tasks.

The next question was "How often did you interact with individual students?"

T1: Um. Fairly often, I suppose. Um, I try not to do too much because I think sometimes, I'm interrupting. And sometimes I think they might feel a little bit shy or intimidated in their group of 3 or 4 to, to, ah, respond to me or fear of, you know, teacher coming, approaching them individually, so fairly often but not very often.

I: Well. Some students told me that they wanted to interact with you individually during class.

T1: That's interesting.

I: Yeah, they want to talk to you individually, actually.

T1: Actually I've got that a lot in course evaluations, students have said a lot. But then, I think, it's student by student. Some students say that. You talked to three students, but in a sense, you have to be careful because the three students you talked to were students who did volunteer, and they were in the end probably were going to be the most motivated ones. I'm sorry to say that.

I: No, no that's OK.

T1: Your samples are little bit biased. So, other students may not.

I: That's difficult, but they wanted to talk with you. I've never heard of that, so that's good.

T1: I get that a lot in course evaluations but I think there are the students, a lot of them, even unmotivated ones, want to. But they might feel frustrated and being able to communicate and I don't know, maybe that's something I need to look at them and make more effort.

I was glad to see that the teacher was honest and open in answering my questions and was

prepared to address the fact that his students wanted more individual interaction. This teacher does not appear to be an authoritarian teacher, and seems to be more comfortable with Ehrman and Dörnyei's other roles, such as prompter, coach, scriptwriter, audience and another actor.

Finally, I asked why he did not use any textbooks. He gave the following reasons:

I: And you don't use textbooks, right?

T1: That's correct. Yeah.

I: Why is that?

T1: I'm not happy with, uhm, materials and most texts, because, um, a lot of materials I find is childish and I don't think it's, I don't want to insult the intelligence of students I have, um, that's the main reason. I just find them childish. I find it, find it, uh, artificial. Basically that's it.

He said that some dialogues in the textbooks available in Japan still include the greetings which students learned in junior high school, and which at university they are asked to learn again. Unfortunately, some publishers bring out bilingual textbooks simply for the sake of profit, Japan being a country where it is easy to sell them.

4.3.3.1 Interview with student 1

Next, I interviewed three group leaders from this teacher's class (2 male students and one female student) simply because they were the ones who volunteered to be interviewed. This may have entailed some bias, because group leaders are usually good students. All the students were interviewed in Japanese. I concentrate now on individual points made during the interviews. The background of the interviewees may have influenced their ways of studying and personality.

First, I interviewed a female student (in Japanese) at 12:30 in the afternoon on 13th May, 1999

in a classroom. I got her permission to tape-record this interview. She had often listened to English tapes as a child. She liked learning English as a tool for communication and, for her future work as researcher; she thought that reading English would be important. She had never been abroad. "I" stands for the interviewer and "S1" stands for the interviewee.

I: Did you enjoy learning English today?

S1: Well, I enjoyed it but I was with a different group today. My former group members were active and spoke a lot. It was easy to do tasks with them. However, today's group members were not motivated well and they did not listen carefully to what the teacher said. I guess that they were worried about their next test and they chatted about that instead of doing today's tasks.

I: What test?

S1: The next vocabulary quiz. Some of them did not do well last time and they were worried about failing this class.

I: I know that you had a difficult time to get your group to do the task. How did you solve this problem?

S1: I asked all the questions and tried to encourage them to answer.

I: Did you speak in English or Japanese?

S1: I tried to speak in English but if they did not understand my questions, I spoke in Japanese.

I: What sorts of problem did you have today in your group?

S1: The members of my group were not motivated. They were thinking about something else.

I: I think their attitude was bad today. Some of them were slumped over the desk.

S1: Yeah.

I: How about the girl in your group?

S1: Well, she did not speak a lot, but when I asked questions, she answered me. She never asked questions.

I: Did you ask the teacher for help when you had difficulties in leading this group?

S1: Yes. I asked the teacher for vocabulary when I could not find the right English words.

I: How did your teacher help you?

S1: He gave me the English equivalent for some Japanese words. He understands Japanese.

While this female leader had had a difficult time encouraging her group to do the tasks and needed some help from the teacher because her group members were not cooperating to finish the group tasks, one of them was slumped over his desk as if asleep. As an example of teacher-student interaction, what she had asked for was some English words and what the teacher had done was to give them. This was not much help for the task of leading an

inactive group. Neither the teacher nor this student had strategies for improving the group work during the class.

The last question was as follows:

- I: What do you think about asking only the group leaders to report on what had been discussed in the groups?
- S1: Though we would not have had enough time for everybody to report at the end, if the groups were fixed and all of the same size, it would have been better if everybody had reported in English.

This may have been her solution to the problem of giving everyone a chance to speak English in class, since English is a tool for communication. If the class is small enough, probably everyone can speak English at least once during each class. However, in Japan, classes are large and it is difficult to allow enough time for each student to speak aloud in English. What this student said was that each student takes a different role in group work, and, in theory, all students can practise their spoken English when they become group leader. In fact, in the EFL situation in Japan, most students seldom have an opportunity to use English. She may have been suggesting that she wanted the teacher to plan how opportunities could be given to everyone to use the target language in class.

4.3.3.2 Interview with student 2

On 13th May, 1999, I interviewed a male student (in Japanese) at 2:00 in the afternoon in a classroom. I got his permission to tape-record this interview. S2 answered cheerfully during the interview. He had learned English since the age of 10 and his mother liked English. He had learned English by the grammar-translation method in junior and senior high schools. He preferred that day's English class for speaking and listening to the junior and senior high school classes for reading and writing. He was learning English because it

was a required subject and in the future he wanted to go to Australia. He also preferred studying with group members because he enjoyed learning different opinions, values and ideas from other people. In group work, he could cooperate in tasks with other members. He could take an active part in group work in class and enjoyed leading a group. He had never been abroad. His father was an obstetrician and gynecologist.

I: Did you have problems in your group today?

S2: No. We even chatted in English. We talked a lot and I enjoyed today's lesson.

I: Did your group members cooperate with you to do the tasks?

S2: Yes, very well.

S2 was a cheerful group leader and his personality influenced his group positively. His group was a good example of positive intermember relations, which enhanced interaction among the group members who cooperated to do the tasks. The members of this group talked a good deal, laughed, nodded and took plenty of notes. This group succeeded in building up a sense of trust in others.

The next question was as follows:

I: Do you have any feedback from your teacher?

S2: Well, today, we did only two tasks. Some groups finished these tasks earlier and they chatted a lot. So I think we could do more tasks.

I: Yeah, I agree with you. I noticed that many students finished these tasks earlier than the teacher expected. This was why they chatted a lot.

S2: You are right.

I: What else do you want to ask your teacher?

S2: Well, um, I want to have a chance to talk with my teacher in class. I would like to know how easily my Japanese accent can be understood by a native speaker of English.

I: What do you mean?

S2: I mean I want to speak with my teacher face to face.

I: What makes you say so?

S2: Uhm, I do not want to hesitate to speak with foreigners. Practising speaking English with native speakers of English helps smooth communication. When we go abroad, we speak to the native speakers of a language. I do not know exactly what I am saying, but I assume that my English with a Japanese accent is different from the English spoken by native speakers of English. My purpose in learning

English is to communicate with the native speakers of English. This is why I do not like to speak English with Japanese people, because it is easy for us to work out what we are trying to say in English, even with broken English. I think we cannot learn the English used by native speakers of English.

I: Is your attitude different when a Japanese English teacher teaches and when a native speaker of English teaches?

S2: Yes, of course.

I: Could tell me more about that?

S2: Um, OK, when I speak to a Japanese English teacher, I expect him or her to understand what I say in English because he or she is Japanese, but when I speak to a native speaker of English, I must make an effort to speak the sort of English that a native speaker of English understands. They cannot guess what I want to say, because they do not know Japanese.

I: How often so far have you spoken with your teacher in class?

S2: There is very little time to speak to my teacher individually. So, I definitely want to know how well I can communicate with native speakers of English.

This student made it clear that his main concern was whether native speakers of English would understand his English. He plainly wanted feedback from his teacher. In fact, I have sometimes heard that Japanese students who are very good at English do not like working with other Japanese students. This is in complete contrast to the more general phenomenon of Japanese students liking to learn from each other; it is a problem which Japanese teachers find hard to solve, since their students are mostly Japanese whose English is below standard and there are not enough native speakers of English in a class. The problem is not so serious, however, if the class is small, and would not have been so serious for this class if the teacher had perhaps interacted more in class with individual students.

4.3.3.3 Interview with student 3

The third interviewee, S3, had not studied grammar in this class but he thought that English was a very important language for anyone who wanted to be a researcher in the future. On 13th May, 1999, I interviewed him (in Japanese) at 3:00 in the afternoon in a classroom. He gave me permission to record this interview. He had taken the TOEFL test and had never attended a *Juku* (private school) for English coaching. He had been born in England and had

gone abroad to study English, finding that the more he studied it in countries where it is the first language, the more he understood it and the better he could communicate with English speakers. In Oxford, he was impressed by his classmates' willingness, despite their accents, to speak volubly, realizing that their poor pronunciation did not stop them from trying to communicate in English.

I: Did you have any problems in your group today?

S3: Yes. One of us did not speak much.

I: How did you solve this problem?

S3: Well, I repeated the question and called him by name.

I: I see. How did he respond?

S3: He made some response.

I: Who complained about you, saying that you and the Chinese student were talking a lot and the content was very difficult?

S3: Oh, well, it was K.

I: During the first part, you and the Chinese student talked too much. Would you agree?

S3: Well...He asked one question after another. So I answered them.

I: There was a power conflict in your group.

S3: Well, I think I had to wait before I answered when the Chinese student asked a question.

I: What do you mean, 'to wait'?

S3: Um, when the Chinese student asked a question, I should have opened this question to the other members before I answered it, so as to give the quiet members a chance to answer the question.

This group leader seemed to have found a strategy: to wait a while before answering and to invite an answer from the group. He seemed to realize that waiting time is important, if quiet students are to answer. During the activities of the second part he did, in fact, he gave these students a chance to talk. He called other members by name and asked them what they thought and he asked the Chinese student to wait for them when the Chinese student wanted to speak.

The interview continued:

I: Did you have a difficult time asking your teacher questions?

S3: Yeah. You know, he tries not to interact with us while he is monitoring. He and

we do different things in class.

I: I see. What do you want your teacher to do in class?

S3: Very difficult to answer. (Silence) It is difficult. Um, well, I would like him to interact more with individual student when he monitors. I think that speaking English with a native speaker of English enhances our speech skills.

I: Why do you think so?

S3: Well, Japanese and native speakers of English speak English with different intonation and pronunciation, the flow of speech is very different. I notice that when I was abroad. If we communicate with native speakers of English more, we can learn better English, I think. Japanese English is easier [for us] to understand than English which the native speakers of English use.

This student also wanted to interact more with his teacher. Indeed, in this class, in general, the students seemed to want to interact more with their English teacher. Tsui argues that such interaction is important because language is the subject of study as well as the medium of communication.

Students who listen to the teacher's instructions and explanations when they express their views, answer questions and carry out tasks and activities are not only learning about the language but also putting to use the language that they are learning. In situations where the target language is seldom used outside the classroom and the students' exposure to the target language is therefore mainly in the classroom, the kind of input and interaction that is made available is particularly important (1995, p. 12).

4.3.4 Main findings from this class

In this class, the character and personalities of the group leaders appeared to affect group dynamics positively. There was a great deal of interaction in most of the groups. Good leadership seems to have exerted a positive influence on the group dynamics. In most cases, the students in the different groups cooperated well with each other. For example, they compared their answers with other people's, exchanged opinions, taught spellings and pronunciations, and waited for every member to finish writing the answers. The strong learners, however, tended at times to control the other members of the group; for example, the Chinese student sometimes prevented other students from speaking. A group leader needs to

consider the need of weaker students to join in with the group work. Group leaders need to be friendly but emphatic in getting the tasks done. In one of the groups, which did not carry out the tasks, the students did not overcome their fear of the unknown and of their classmates; they could not build group dynamics.

Unfortunately, there was very little interaction between the teacher and the students in this class, because he merely walked about between the groups. If he had learned some psychoanalytic theory, he could perhaps have interacted better with the students as he monitored them. However, he could not help the members of the underperforming group and he missed the power-conflict in another group. All teachers as classroom leaders probably need to observe students and offer help when the students need it. In addition, all the three students interviewed wanted to interact more with the teacher. However, the teacher's past experience probably inhibited him from interacting with his students. If he could have overcome this he might perhaps have been a better leader and facilitator. His behaviour and leadership of his group (the class) surely affected the teaching and thus the learning, in my opinion.

4.4. State university class 2

The second extract features a Japanese English teacher at the National University of Education who holds a master's degree in literature, has taught English for 32 years and now teaches students who want to become primary or junior high school teachers. He was teaching an English class "Reading and writing", in which the Japanese students learned about the Japanese language in English.

4.4.1 Observation of class 2

I observed the entire 90-minute class, which fell into two parts at 10:40 in the morning of 28th May, 1999, after having obtained the teacher's permission. In the second part, I noticed the five foreign exchange students (one male and four female) who were visiting this state university for a month. Two of the foreign students, who were studying at a sister-school in America, came from the USA and three came from Canada. They had joined this class in order to learn Japanese. It also provided a good opportunity for the Japanese students to hear English in the classroom.

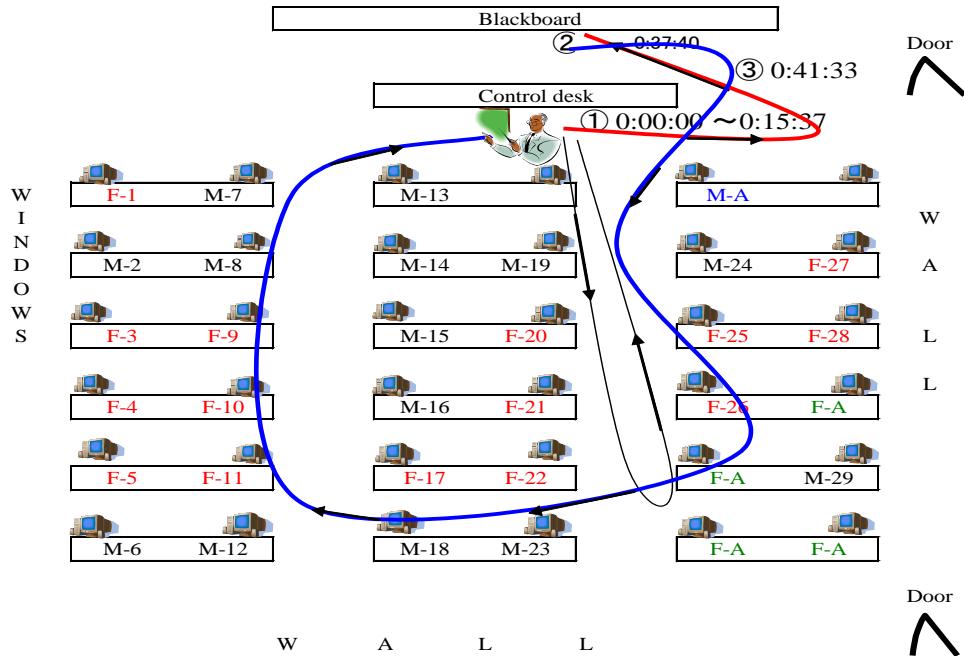
This classroom observation illustrates well the fact that the way in which the teacher behaves can influence the group climate. This authoritative teacher had great control over his students, and the power relationship led him during the first part of the lecture to be very authoritative without interacting with them. For example, his students sat in their seats with very serious faces and he called on students to read from the textbook, according to the class list. After a student had read a few paragraphs, the teacher summarized the content, without inviting questions (see Figure 4.6). In this class, the teacher and the students interacted only vertically and individually because of the teacher's authoritative approach to his job. This led to one-way communication between teacher and students in class and little interaction. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology in Japan does not encourage this type of communication in class at all (Nemoto, 1999, p. 228). The teacher appeared to ignore the fact that his students could perhaps have been active participants and did not seem to consider what their preferences in learning the target language might be. His students followed his teaching method. The teacher seldom monitored his students nor interacted with them (see Figure 4.4). His behaviour appeared to correspond with that observed by

Malamah-Thomas, 1987.

The teacher... fails to respond to these reactions. He does not probe the silence to see if it indicates understanding or confusion...He forges ahead with his prepared plan of action regardless of class reaction, and he seems to be acting in complete isolation from the class (Malamah-Thomas, 1987, p. 6-7).

During the first part of the lecture, the students sat at the desks with computers and most of them sat beside a student of the same gender as themselves. Figure 4.4 shows the seating arrangements and the teacher's monitoring. When a Canadian student told him that she had a different text, the teacher walked to her desk to check what book she had. Other than that, the teacher stayed in front of the classroom with the attendance sheet. There was very little interaction, either, between student and student, though interaction facilitates learning (Gass, 1997). The students did not ask questions about the content and many students had their English dictionaries with them, even though the textbook was set out bilingually, with a Japanese translation of the English sentences. The teacher never used a computer during the class; he used only the classroom audio equipment so that students could listen to the tape and read the textbook simultaneously. They did both all the time.

Figure 4.4 Seating arrangement and teacher's monitoring



The teacher distributed the sheets for that day's vocabulary quiz, which he then gave. After he collected the answer sheets, he started the lesson of the day, "The Japanese language". He called the students individually by name to read the same paragraphs that they had listened to on the tape. As each student read the text, he corrected his or her pronunciation. After each student had finished reading a paragraph, he summarized the content in Japanese. When he was not sure of the pronunciation of a word ("auxiliary"), he asked an American student if his pronunciation was correct or not. He repeated the same procedure for 21 minutes and suddenly he asked the foreign students to read the textbook one by one, even though they had all listened to the tape. This procedure continued for over 8 minutes. After about thirty-eight minutes had passed, the teacher told the students to form groups of 6 or 7 members, each including a foreign student. 41 minutes after the start of the lecture, the teacher divided the students into five groups. Each group had six or seven students, but had to choose its own leader; no roles were allotted to other members, either. Each group had

one foreign student with whom to carry out the tasks.

In the Japanese EFL context, opportunities to speak English are rare, and this teacher seemed to be ignoring his Japanese university students in order to practise speaking English with these foreign students; moreover, he did not tell his students in advance that foreign students would be attending this class. He used his traditional authority to decide without consultation what to do in his class. Figure 4.5 shows the groups in the classroom and the way in which the teacher monitored them. F and J stand for foreign students and Japanese students respectively, M and F stand for male and female respectively. Four of the foreign students could speak a little Japanese and one male American student could speak rather more. He often used his electronic dictionary and initiated the work to be done by his group.

Figure 4.5 The groups and the teacher's monitoring

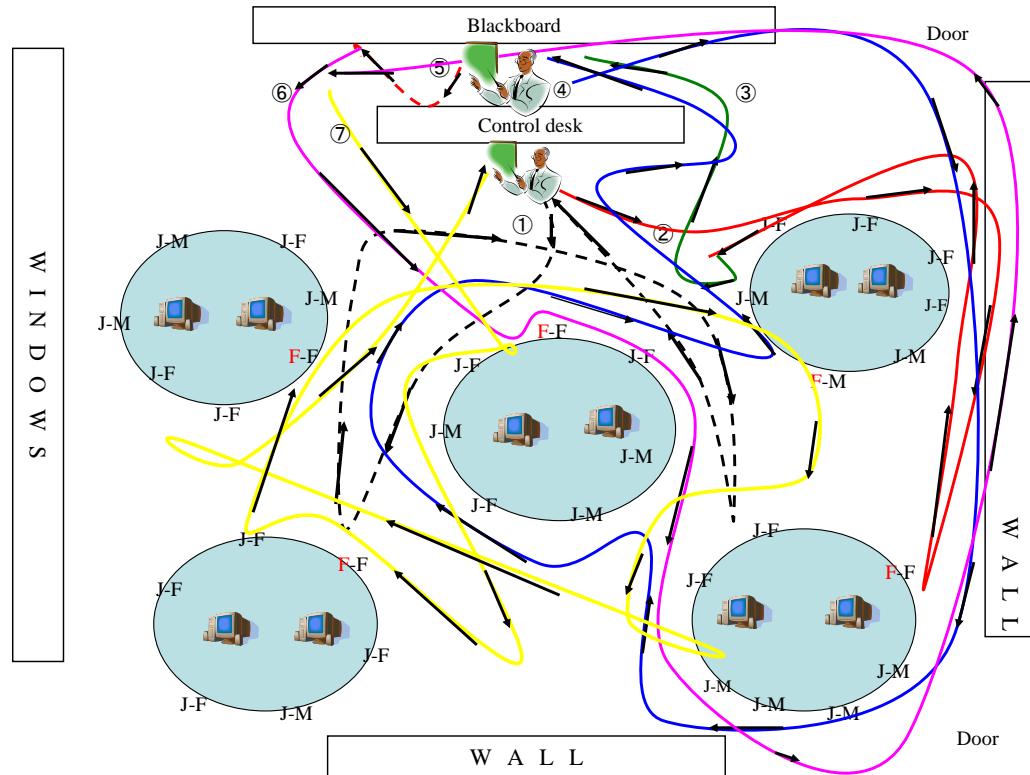


Figure 4.6 shows the timeline of the lesson on the morning of 28th May.

Figure 4.6 The timeline of the lesson.

Time	Teacher	Student	Students
0:00:00	Distributing answer sheets for the quiz		
0:00:26	Introducing five foreign students from the USA and Canada.		Five foreign students enter the classroom.
0:01:03	Introducing foreign students.		The students clap to welcome the five foreign students. They sit down on the vacant seats.
0:02:10	Giving vocabulary quiz on 10 words	Some students try to ask their classmates for the answers as they hand in their answer sheets.	The Japanese students take the quiz seriously and laugh when the teacher tells a joke.
0:05:29	Collecting answer sheets and giving feedback.		
0:06:40	Starting today's lesson: "Japanese language"		
0:07:44	Teacher starts the tape recorder		All the students look at the textbook as the tape recorder is playing.
0:08:41	He stops the tape	A female student reads the first paragraph in a low voice.	
0:08:43	Teacher asks a student to read the textbook and corrects pronunciation if the student cannot read the words correctly.	Students read the textbook one by one as the teacher asks them.	The foreign students listen to the tape recorder too.
0:09:43	Teacher paraphrases the content in Japanese. Next he calls a name and asks the student to read the next paragraph. He summarizes the content and pronounces the words which the student cannot read. He repeats the same procedures.		All the students look at their textbook as their classmate reads a paragraph.
0:14:31	Teacher asks a Canadian student to read the paragraph. He goes to her to make sure what textbook she has. He asks another Canadian student to read the next paragraph.	A foreign student tells the teacher that she has a different textbook and shows it to him. She is given the right textbook and does the task.	The students look at their textbook as each student reads it.
0:18:57	Teacher suddenly asks the researcher about a regional accent in Japan. He tells jokes.	I answer and give some examples.	Some Japanese students enjoy the teacher's jokes.
0:20:34	Teacher asks one female student the same question.	I answer him in English. She gives an example of different accents: each one in the accent of a different region.	When the teacher and researcher imitate the different accents, the students laugh.
0:21:33	Teacher turns on the cassette tape recorder.	The Japanese female student reads the text in a very low voice. Each Japanese student reads the textbook.	All the students go back to looking at the textbook.
0:24:18	Teacher asks a Japanese female student to read the paragraph.		
0:25:37	Teacher turns on the cassette tape recorder.	Her voice is too low, but she reads well.	All students go back to looking at the textbook.
0:26:13	Teacher asks a female Japanese student to read.		
0:27:11	Teacher asks the Japanese students to teach 4 Kanji words to the foreign students. Then he turns on the cassette tape recorder.	He reads the paragraph.	
0:28:43	Teacher asks an American male student to read the paragraph and he summarizes the content in Japanese.	She reads the textbook in a very low voice.	
0:29:32	Teacher asks a Japanese female student to read the paragraph. He pronounces the word for her.	She looks at the teacher when she cannot pronounce a word	
0:30:05	Then he asks an American student whether his pronunciation of "auxiliary" is correct or not.	An American student pronounces the word slowly and the teacher repeats it.	All the students go back to looking at the textbook.
0:32:14	Teacher starts the tape and stops it, then he tells a student to read the next paragraph. He repeats the same procedures.	A Japanese who is reading from the textbook is not sure about the pronunciation.	
0:37:40	He asks a female student to read more loudly.	Her voice is too low and she raises it.	Some students listen to the teacher. Some students stretch or yawn.
0:38:00	Teacher explains "homonyms". Teacher tells students to form 5 groups, each group containing one foreign student.		
0:38:00	Teacher tells the Japanese students to teach the foreign students some Japanese words and phrases.		
0:41:33	Teacher draws some Japanese Kanji on the blackboard to explain the characters and the meanings, with a joke.	Each student has a notebook, dictionaries and textbooks.	Students move their chairs to make groups as instructed. Each group includes one foreign student.
0:42:34	Teacher divides the students into 5 groups. Each group has 6 or 7 members.		
0:50:00	Teacher monitors.	A male American student starts to use his electronic dictionary when his group members do not understand what he says.	Starting to teach the foreign students. In each group, the Japanese students discuss what the appropriate words are in Japanese.
0:52:00	Teacher goes back to his desk to do something.		The groups have no leaders, but they try to cooperate to express themselves in English. The Japanese students laugh and talk in Japanese, but some foreign students know only a few Japanese words. They take notes on what they have learned.
0:58:36	Teacher monitors.		
1:20:02	Teacher allows students to talk freely once they have finished the tasks.		
1:21:00	Class is over.	One female student encourages the others to speak in Japanese and English.	
1:29:39			

Since the students were in the computer-assisted classroom, they were able when told to move their chairs to form groups. The teacher told the Japanese students to teach the foreign students the following four things: 1) Ten Chinese characters; 2) the polite forms in Japanese for male and female Japanese words; 3) the homonyms of bridge, chopsticks and other words; 4) useful expressions for conversations in Japanese. While monitoring, he spoke Japanese, and when foreign students asked him questions, he spoke English. The group work continued for about 52 minutes. The teacher monitored more often during this period than he did during the first part of the day's lecture.

At first, the Japanese students seemed to be fearful and suspicious and displayed what appeared to be a low degree of tolerance because they had not heard of the visit of the foreign students. They did, however, manage to overcome these negative inter-member relations. Negative inter-member relations appeared to become more positive after they had overcome their fear and anxiety towards the unknown people and new things. The communication strategies which they employed with these foreign students included the use of gestures, dictionaries, drawings and short English phrases or single English words. The foreign students had a difficult time communicating with the Japanese students because the latter could not speak English well. However, they made an effort to understand what the Japanese students were saying and also used strategies such as gestures, drawing, authentic materials and dictionaries. In no group was it clear who the group leader was. Usually the teacher chooses the group leaders because Japanese students seldom volunteer to lead and it saves time in class if the teacher chooses people who are good at English. If there is no group leader in a Japanese classroom, the students will not complete the tasks as a group, but will rather do something by themselves. All the group members on this occasion seemed to

be dependent on everyone else, and they expected someone else to be able to speak English to the foreign student in their group. There was very little interaction between the quiet students and other members. The lack of group leadership may have been the reason for the lack of interaction in the groups. One female student encouraged other members to speak English, saying “Speak! Speak!” at one point. The quiet students seemed to concentrate on listening and hardly said anything in English to the foreign student in their group.

Before the group work, the students studied by themselves with textbooks and dictionaries. They never asked questions and seldom looked at the teacher. There was no evidence of cooperative learning between the students and the teacher and there was no communication or information exchange between teacher and student or between students. The students in the first part of the lecture appeared to be very isolated learners. This learning style may reflect Johnson, Johnson and Smith’s (1995) “Old Paradigm” of teaching, which is shown in Table 2.4 in Chapter 2. As a result, students become passive recipients of knowledge, and wait to be spoon-fed by the teacher. Japanese students in these conditions tend to ignore other students, and they do not share any information with their classmates. This behaviour is sometimes referred to as ‘negative interdependence’ (Johnson and Johnson, 1995, p. 90-91).

If the particular students whom I observed were to spend more class time learning together in small groups, they might learn more and build group cohesiveness, and as a result become more easily tolerant of the diversity among them. During the first part of the lesson which I observed, all the students studied by themselves without any interaction with classmates or their teacher. They merely followed their teacher’s instructions. There was very little laughter, giggling, talking, exchanging of opinions or thoughts, to begin with. This typifies

the language classes at Japanese universities where, in general, the only speaker is the teacher, telling the students what to do. As a result, some students may take a nap during lectures, chat with their neighbours, or maybe pretend that they are listening to the instructions. In such cases it is unlikely that much learning is taking place. However, for teachers, it is very easy to give lectures and teach what they have planned in advance. Teachers can be narcissistic in their teaching. However, if students feel responsible for one another's learning as well as their own, their learning will be more successful. If students get rewards or are evaluated according to the group's achievement, they will probably be more willing to cooperate with each other. In a competitive and individualistic classroom, it is difficult to achieve a high level of reasoning strategies and critical thinking. The one-way lecture system does not appear to facilitate interaction.

During group work with the foreign students, the Japanese students whom I observed appeared at first to feel tense and unsure of what to do. Though the teacher divided the students into groups of six or seven, he did not assign any roles within the groups. Dividing students into groups is not enough by itself to encourage group work, as the teachers would have known if they had studied the process of group formation (inter-member relations) in the classroom. The members in the group were meeting new or unknown people in their group and if they had been introduced to them and told something about them by the group leader or another member of their group, they might have been more likely to accept the foreign visiting students. Groups theoretically develop through group formation, transition, performance, and dissolution (Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998, pp. 109-110). But in the groups which I observed, some of these steps appeared to be missing. When the group work started, the teacher divided the class into 5, each segment including a foreign student; the members of

the groups looked at each other or greeted one another if they knew them already. The interaction between the foreign students and the Japanese students, however, was at first hesitant. To begin with, they sat quietly and looked at each other, wondering what they should do, and some looked worried. It would not have been surprising if they had had conflicts in doing the tasks, since conflicts are common in group dynamics at the transition stage. However, these groups did not reach this stage, as Japanese students tend not to argue with others in their group. If one member of the group made a suggestion, they agreed, nodding, smiling or saying ‘Yes.’ When the teacher divided them into groups, somehow, they tried to cooperate with the foreign students to carry out the tasks. Then, at the end of this class, the teacher told them that these foreign students would visit them again. The Japanese university students seemed to be happy to study with them the following week. This announcement became a signal of dismissal to them (providing a sense of continuity).

Learners do not know how much they will benefit from the classes or whether they will be able to cope with the requirements. They cannot help continuously comparing themselves to others, many of whom will appear to be more competent and proficient in several respects. They also try to get used to the teacher’s personality and style, and work out which behaviors are acceptable or desirable to the teacher (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 112).

The teacher in this second class appeared to show narcissistic behaviour. When he was teaching the students, he did most of the talking and did not give the students a chance to express their thoughts or opinions. The behaviour of these students seemed to have been moulded by their teacher’s personality and style.

4.4.2 Interview with the Japanese teacher of class 2

In order to gain further information about the way that the teacher’s behaviour might have affected the students’ behaviour, and what impact it had on their learning, I interviewed both

the teacher and some of the students in his class. As he asked, I interviewed the teacher in his office (mostly in Japanese) at 12:50 in the afternoon on 28th May, 1999. He answered all my questions in Japanese. I handed over the question sheets to him before the interview started.

I had some difficulty in interviewing this teacher because he seemed not to be serious about answering my questions. He may not have liked being interviewed by me as a female and a younger teacher. During the interview, he smiled a good deal. At first I interpreted this as meaning that he was welcoming me as an interviewer, but with hindsight, I suspect that his constant smiling may have been a sign that he was embarrassed to be interviewed, for Japanese culture has the convention of “Front and Rear” (*Omote* and *Ura* in Japanese). When Japanese people say “Yes”, sometimes it means “No”, producing miscommunication and misunderstanding. Having to read between the lines can act as a stumbling block to communication. In observing his class, I noticed that he generally did not offer suggestions, or much advice or encouragement when he monitored. He merely walked around without much interaction with the students. This behaviour, along with his ambiguous answers to my questions, may have been a reflection of his lack of confidence in teaching.

In the following extract, my aim was to discover what kind of teaching methodology he favoured. In the first part of the class, all students were quiet and looking at their textbooks, interacting little with the teacher.

I: What kind of teaching methodology do you use?

T2: Today? Students read aloud the textbook. They understand the content and they learn about Japan. Do you know what kind of methodology this is?

I: Well...

T2: The “reading method!” (with a laugh).

I: Oh, you do not have to name the methodology, but you corrected their pronunciation sometimes. Er, did you summarize the content?
T2: No. I chose the important content and explained it.
I: I see, so, you explained about that, didn't you?
T2: Yes, yes.

This teacher had majored in English literature, so his problem may have been that he knew very little about teaching methodologies. As I wanted to avoid asking him something that he might be reluctant to answer, I did not ask him to name his chosen methodology. However, what he said may indicate that some Japanese English teachers may not be qualified to teach English, because in Japan, before the communicative approach was introduced, most Japanese teachers prepared for a career in English teaching by a course in English literature. Their main teaching method was grammar-translation.

A propos of teachers' beliefs, Williams and Burden point out that some teachers cannot help being influenced by their values, outlook and conceptions of their work, which they should be aware of (1997 p. 56):

Even if a teacher acts spontaneously, or from habit without thinking about the action, such actions are nevertheless prompted by deep-rooted beliefs about how languages are learned, which will pervade their classroom actions more than a particular methodology they are told to adopt or coursebook they follow. If the teacher-as-educator is one who is constantly re-evaluating in the light of new knowledge his or her beliefs about language, or about how language is learned, or about education as a whole, then it is crucial that teachers first understand and articulate their own theoretical perspectives (p. 57).

In the next extract, I was trying to discover why he had chosen a particular textbook, because choosing the right textbook is important in motivating learning in an EFL situation such as Japan's.

I: Why do you use this textbook?
T2: Because today's class is in reading and writing, not speaking or listening.
I: Why do you use the bilingual textbook, "Talking about Japan, Q and A"?

T2: This textbook tells the reader about Japan. Students can learn many things about Japan and they learn difficult words. Using new vocabulary, students will write about themselves in English. For example, students learned about one prefecture and wrote something about it in English at the end of today's class.

I asked more questions about this textbook.

I: Why did you choose this textbook?

T2: Well, these days, more students go abroad to study, but they do not know about Japan. Some students told me that they wanted to learn about Japan in English and I used this textbook last year too.

I: What feedback did the student give you about this textbook?

T2: I got good feedback from them so I use this book now.

I: Oh, I see.

T2: I can learn about Japan from this textbook, too.

Here, the teacher appeared to have understood the students' needs and accepted their choice of content for the lessons. However, he did not tell me how many students had approved this textbook. During this interviewing, all his answers were ambiguous and he did not allow me to probe more deeply.

Williams and Burden also say that teachers' views of teaching mirror their views of themselves, and their teaching behaviour reflects their essence as a person (p. 63). I wonder whether a lack of confidence caused him to answer my questions vaguely. Although it is very difficult to tell from a single interview, I suspect that this teacher may have had a somewhat traditional approach to teaching, and that he may have been rather sensitive about this. If he had examined more textbooks about Japanese culture, he might have found some on the same subject with a more communicative bias, which would help his students to learn more. This extract does not show how he viewed his behaviour in the classroom, but I focused in my questions on the choice of textbook because making the right choice is very important for language learning and has much influence on it.

4.4.3 Interviews with students from Class 2

Next, I interviewed three students from this class (one male student and two female students) who had volunteered to be interviewed. All the students were interviewed in Japanese. Below I highlight some individual points from what they said. Their background is likely to have influenced their way of studying and personality. The abbreviations S4 and S5 stand for the two female students, S6 for the male student and "I" for myself. All of them want to be teachers in the future.

4.4.4 Interview with student 4

On 31st May, 1999, at 11:00 in the morning, I interviewed this student in a classroom, getting her permission beforehand to tape-record our conversation. S4 studied English from 7-11 years old at a private school. She had learned English from an American teacher twice a week for two hours at a time for five years. In this teacher's classes she was in a group of six students and she had learned English words, pronunciation, games, acting out, reading picture books, and songs. Then she had learned English at a state school in preparation for the entrance tests. She had been disappointed in these classes and she had not enjoyed English lessons at this time. She told me that she preferred studying by herself and she has never been abroad. In this first extract, I wanted to find out how much S4 used the target language and why she did not speak or express her opinions, ideas and thoughts in class. I asked her:

I: Did you speak in English with other students in class?

S4: No.

I: Did you feel lonely, when you sat by yourself?

S4: No.

I: Did you share your opinions, thoughts, and ideas with your classmates?

S4: No, I did not have the chance to share. This class is for reading and writing, so there is no chance to discuss.

I: In class some of your classmates described their experience when an earthquake

struck. How did you feel about them?

S4: Since primary school, I have been told to be silent or listen when the teacher was speaking. The teacher usually calls our names one by one from the list. I have never interrupted a conversation between a teacher and other students.

I: When someone is expressing an opinion, do you just listen to them?

S4: Yes. I do not express my opinions, because we should listen to other people's opinions and try not to interrupt them. It's a question of habit. I am unwilling to express my thoughts. I feel some peer pressure, too, to make no mistakes when I express my thoughts in front of my classmates. I know students in other countries speak up a lot in class.

I: Did you find it hard to speak to your English teacher in English?

S4: Yes. If I had enough ability to speak English, I would. But I worry whether the teacher can understand my English or not. I hesitate when I speak English.

I: If you don't speak English, you can't improve your speaking ability, can you?

S4: Yes. If everybody is speaking English in class, I will speak it. When I have a question, I go to the teacher and ask a question in English after class, but not in front of my classmates. I feel peer pressure when I ask questions in English. Yes, I feel it very much.

Here, S4 was bringing up the sense of peer pressure and anxiety in class. In fact, Japanese teachers tend to tell their students to listen when anyone, whether student or teacher, speaks in class. Because of the one-way communication in Japanese classes from the teacher alone, the students tend to sit silently in class and do not express their opinions, thoughts or ideas. Westerners and teachers who are native speakers of English may criticise these silent students, but the students themselves do not see it as a fault. They are simply following earlier rules. Teachers feel they must control the flow of events, saying "Quiet" many times in class.

In reflecting on the lessons, teachers paid a great deal of attention to classroom management, particularly in maintaining control over the flow of events (Nunan, 1996, p. 46).

However, one-way communication is opposed to the views of MEXT (the Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Culture) about English language teaching. As noted in Chapter 1, MEXT aims to promote two-way communication in the classroom.

In this second extract, I wanted to discover the difficulties which this student experienced in class, and look at how she solved them.

I: Did you have any difficulties in speaking to your English teacher in English?

S4: Yes. If I had enough ability to speak English, I would. But before I speak, I worry

that the teacher may not understand my English, before I speak. I hesitate to speak English, as I don't have enough English ability.

S4 also showed anxiety when she spoke English because she wanted to speak perfect English. According to Ngar-fun Lir and Littlewood (1997), this is another possible cause of Asian students' apparent reticence.

...when students speak English, they have a strong concern to speak it well...many students feel a sense of unease speaking English simply because they do not think they are performing well enough (1997, p. 376).

The remark of her English teacher, a native speaker, sounded arrogant: "If you want to speak Japanese, please do not take this class", because, when it comes to English, students have no choice; it is a required subject. This teacher may not have been aware of the fact that it is often useful to build a learning alliance between teacher and student. The teacher's role in the learning alliance is to (a) help students manage their feelings, especially those related to being ignorant or wrong, (b) manage student identification with the teacher and the teacher's hope for the students and (c) make use of their own cognitive skills (organizing, synthesizing, etc.) to help learners make sense of their learning experiences (Ehrman, 1998, p. 98). Effective teachers create a personal learning atmosphere, since teaching is a personal expression of the self (see p. 149 of this chapter above for the comment by Williams and Burden, 1997, p. 63).

S4 seemed to have a policy of sometimes speaking English and sometimes staying silent. Whether she spoke English in class depended on her English teachers' behaviour in the classroom. She also had a great desire to speak only perfect English, and she had not solved this problem. This may tell us why she felt anxious in class. There is one possible way of relieving her anxiety. If S4 could have met more people who spoke English with different accents or could have listened to various kinds of English, it might have given her confidence,

and reduced her anxiety. These days, textbook companies try to make CDs or cassette tapes to attach to textbooks, on which various kinds of English are recorded. Thus Japanese students can become familiar with different varieties of English. This may stop them wishing to speak only perfect English, but instead be prepared to communicate in what English they have.

4.4.5 Interview with student 5

The second interviewee was S5, a female student. Her interview was on 11th June, 1999 at 1:00 in the afternoon. I got her permission to tape-record this interview. When she was growing up, her family had moved house every four or five years because of her father's work. She had enjoyed studying English at junior high school, but later, at high school, she had not liked the subject because the proportion of grammatical learning had been very high and the teacher had controlled the students too strictly, telling them, for example, how many pages to read per day. There had been very little interaction between students and teacher. At junior high school, in contrast, she had had very good grades for English, giving her good motivation to study; she understood English well. In this first extract, I was trying to discover whether she had understood the content when she was reading the textbook, bearing in mind that S4 had told me she had not. Japanese English teachers tend to use reading aloud as an activity in junior high school and senior high school classes. However, as the students get older, they do not always want to read aloud in the classroom. I suspect that reading aloud does not help them to understand the content. I wanted also to find what problems there were in this class. I asked her:

I: Why are you learning English?

S5: It's required. I don't like studying English, memorizing the meanings of words, and I am not interested in learning grammar. But I like speaking English.

I: Did you enjoy today's lesson?

S5: Hard to say “Yes”, because I didn’t prepare for the lesson today. I was worried all the time in case the teacher would call my name.

I: When you read aloud, did you understand the content?

S5: No. I didn’t understand the content at all, and I concentrated on how to pronounce the words. I do not understand the chunks of sentences when I’m reading.

I: What do you think of reading aloud as a strategy for language acquisition?

S5: It is important. Reading aloud is more important than writing. Compared to this reading and writing class, it is easier, but the class is not so much fun, because I’m learning English with the same procedures every time. In the spoken English class, which is taught by a teacher who is a native speaker, I enjoy it very much.

I: What did you do in today’s class?

S5: When I was listening to someone reading the textbook, I found out the unknown words, and the pronunciation. I marked the chunks of the sentences as I listened.

Her answers may indicate to us that the way in which her Japanese English teacher taught was not creative enough to motivate her learning, because he always used the same procedures.

This student wanted to learn English as a tool of communication. There appears to me to be a mismatch between what the student wants to learn and what the teacher wants to teach. In the spoken English class, there were many activities in which she was involved and there she was an active learner, but in the reading and writing class, she seemed to be a passive learner.

This student did not solve her problem of anxiety during this class. Lack of preparation made her worry for fear her name would be called. In many English classes in Japan, teachers ask students to read aloud, but most students do not read aloud well. Often, it is very hard to understand their English sentences, because they are not confident in their reading. This was the case for the students whom I observed here; it was very hard to understand them as they read from the textbook. They often spoke too softly perhaps because they did not have had enough confidence to read English sentences aloud or they were very shy and dreaded their mistakes being laughed at by their classmates. I wondered whether the teacher could hear what the students said when they read sentence by sentence in a soft voice. In general, when Japanese children become teenagers, they start to behave very differently. In the classroom, they usually speak in a low voice. This being the case, I

wonder what purpose is served by reading aloud at college level. As S5 said, she had not understood the content when she was reading and therefore she had learned only the pronunciation. When someone else read the textbook in a low voice, I wonder whether she could have heard it.

In the second extract, I was trying to find out what problems were caused by group work. I asked S5:

I: What did the members of the group do? Did they speak in English?

S5: Well...no. Ah...R (an American student) talked a lot. Um, we did not speak English to her a lot, but she asked some questions and we answered her. She showed us pictures of her university and other things. I could not say fluently what I meant – I mean, I could not express what I wanted to say...

I: Why?

S5: Well, words! You know, if I do not know the words, I cannot make sentences. If we knew the words [that we wanted], she would understand better what we wanted to say in English. So, we used a Japanese-English dictionary word by word.

I: Did she understand what you said?

S5: Yes! I did not understand everything that she said, but I mostly understood it.

I: How did you know that she had understood what you said?

S5: Um, well, she drew pictures, and used some kinds of gestures, so we thought she understood what we were saying. By nodding...

I: How did she know that you had understood?

S5: Well...ah...gestures, facial expressions, and nodding...She guessed what we were thinking. You know, she led our group and we listened to her. She tried to say the same thing in various different ways so that we could understand. She also used a dictionary.

I: So, you could not understand everything, she said, but you and your group guessed what she meant. All of you got together to work out what she meant and co-operated to guess the answer.

S5: Yes, yes. (with a smile)

I: Who was the leader in your group?

S5: R. She was our leader.

In this group, a foreign student acted as group leader and tried to do the tasks with the Japanese students. They worked together to arrive at the meaning. Their communication strategies were to use dictionaries, gestures, drawings, and pictures. This group seemed not

to follow Ehrman and Dörnyei's steps of group development – formation, transition, performing and dissolution (1998, pp. 109-110); but they worked together in order to improve their collective process. There was only one group leader and no other roles. They all seemed to be hesitant about taking part; no Japanese students volunteered to lead a group and they looked at each other in the hope that someone else would volunteer. They seemed to be waiting for someone to take responsibility. After the American student had waited some time, she took on the role of group leader. They used no ice-breaking activity, such as introducing themselves or briefly deciding what the tasks involved. When a class is divided into groups, Ehrman and Dörnyei say that there tends to be a process of attraction, identification with other group members, friendship and acceptance (p. 113). The Japanese students in my observation were too shy in the presence of the American students; they accepted the American students as their group leaders in order not to lose face and left them to take charge of doing the tasks. When a Japanese student said something, all the others nodded in agreement. It is very rare for Japanese students to object or express different opinions and ideas. Transitions from expressing different opinions to reaching an agreement involve the thorny process of working through conflicts and different opinions. Among Japanese students, these rarely occur, because of the possibility of losing face. The students tend to fall into conformity with their group, while the confident students hide their ability and knowledge.

Even though they had accepted the American student as their group leader, this group talked to each other in Japanese and consequently made it hard for her to understand what they were saying. However, she seemed eventually to guess their meaning. These Japanese students seemed to choose a place in the class close to others of similar language ability; when they

first came into the classroom, they all tried to find their friends and sit together. They appeared to build up easy positive intermember relations, even though the teacher had divided them into random groups. In their groups, the Japanese students did not divide the tasks or ask one to be the scribe, one to present the report and so forth. The Japanese students seemed to fail to designate group roles between the members and the group leader.

In this case, growth appears to have occurred without development. Classroom groups have four potential capacities (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, p. 52):

- (1) the capacity to welcome all participants into full membership and to afford everyone a secure and comfortable place in the group. The Japanese university students were not able to welcome the American student in English because of their poor English ability. When they did the tasks, the American student, who knew little Japanese, had to guess what they were saying. She may easily have felt uncomfortable and insecure in this group. When she tried to communicate with the Japanese students, she had to use the dictionary or drawings and pictures and so did they. The teacher was supposed to support his students emotionally and to strengthen interpersonal relationships, but he simply walked around among the groups;
- (2) The capacity to share influence evenly in the group and to establish egalitarian relationships among all the members. The Japanese students seemed to not to have much of a cooperative relationship with the American students in their groups, but they had to do the tasks. Some students kept quiet, and a very few students tried to communicate with the American student in English by using a dictionary, drawings, gestures and speaking Japanese. As the Japanese students seem to have chosen to have the least possible influence and were waiting for someone else to lean on, they

failed to establish egalitarian relationships with one another;

(3) The capacity to encourage and support one another in the pursuit of individual and group academic goals. Though the Japanese students were not good at speaking English, they encouraged and supported each other, using their dictionaries and they talked together, although admittedly in Japanese. Somehow, they came to a decision about what to teach this American student. As they talked in Japanese, the American student listened and tried to understand what they were talking about. In this sense, they all worked to accomplish the academic tasks. At first, both the Japanese and the American students were anxious about relating to unknown people, but as time went by, they tried to encourage and support each other to accomplish the tasks with a smile. Their strategies were to listen and observe one another's facial expressions and gestures; and

(4) the capacity for all members to work together in changing the group's processes when change means improvement, called "the capacity of self-renewal" (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001, p. 52). It is said that successful group development requires more than this. However, in this case, the members encouraged and supported each other and all the members worked together to carry out the task. This group seemed to come together as a group not by a conscious determination on the part of the members, but by chance. Teachers, therefore, should not expect cohesion in every case, but should adopt in turn the roles of attentive listener, empathetic observer and healer (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, pp. 224-225), instead of simply patrolling the room.

4.4.6 Interview with student 6

I interviewed the third student, S6, on 31st May, 1999 at 1:00 in the afternoon. I got his

permission to tape-record this interview. S6 had studied English for various entrance examinations and wanted to study in England in the future. He seldom expressed his opinions, but appeared to like listening to those of others. In this extract, I was trying to find whether he thought that reading aloud was a useful teaching approach for university English classes. I asked him:

I: How about reading aloud in class? Is it effective for learning English for you?

S6: Yes, it is for me.

I: Why?

S6: If I don't read aloud from the textbook, I don't learn how to pronounce words. In class, I concentrated on how to pronounce words correctly.

I: When you are reading from the textbook, do you understand the content?

S6: No, I don't understand that. I concentrated on pronunciations.

Here, S6 was saying that pronunciation was what he concentrated on when other students were reading aloud. As S5 and S6 both said, they could learn pronunciations when a student read the textbook sentence by sentence, even if they did not understand the meaning of what was being read; reading aloud seems to help them at least to learn how to pronounce the words. Teachers hope that some learners will learn by means of verbal interaction in the classroom, but they should also remember that other students want to practise listening. In this classroom, the teacher forced students to read one by one.

Thus we see that some learners' level of observable verbal interaction in classrooms may be related to their own opinions about how they learn best (whether or not such opinions are well articulated, or even accurate) ... All we can say with confidence is that it is a dangerous oversimplification to suggest that verbal interaction in the classroom is just a case of 'the more the merrier' (Allwright & Bailey, 1991, p. 145).

Even though these two students said that reading aloud helped them to learn pronunciation, it can be argued that it might not help them to comprehend the content, even though choral reading is very common in junior high school; teachers like to use it, and at this stage, it may be useful, because they want to teach students the sound/spelling correspondence. When one

student reads the textbook aloud, he or she is under great pressure to pronounce the words correctly, and this makes reading slower than silent reading. However, reading aloud can be useful even at university level if students read sentences observing chunks or units of meaning. When I observed this class, I could not hear them reading in chunks or units of meaning because their voices were too soft. I wondered how these two students (S5 and S6) could have heard the sounds that the other students were making. Yet I could hear the teacher correcting the pronunciation when necessary

It is difficult to read aloud when one is focusing on meaning at the same time. Students seem to have little time to interact with a text because they concentrate on pronunciation alone. It has been argued that, although reading aloud is popular as a teaching method, it has some major disadvantages:

Perhaps the most serious problem with traditional oral reading is that it lacks real pedagogic purpose. Those who are reading have nothing approaching a task (except, perhaps, the desire to finish one's section without looking foolish). Those who listen, if they do so at all, don't need to understand or react to what they hear (Day, 1993, pp. 261-262).

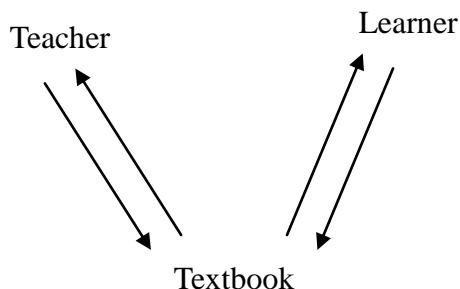
Day suggests that reading aloud can become more effective and interesting, if the learners have post tasks and if they are encouraged to interact with the meaning of the text and with each other (p. 262).

In the next extract, I was trying to discover what problems there were in this group. I asked S6 about it:

I: What kinds of problems did you have today in your group?
S6: Numbers! I didn't know how to say numbers. For example, 28.9%.

Twenty-eight...ah, I don't know.
I: It's twenty-eight point nine.
S6: Oh, I see.
I: When you could not figure out how to read numbers, what did you do?
S6: Firstly, I looked it up in a dictionary. As the dictionary did not say anything about it, I asked the teacher who was teaching me how to say it.

Not only S6, but other students had dictionaries with them and they first looked things up there or asked their classmates. Then they asked the teacher. These were their strategies for solving their problems. As most students had access to a dictionary, the normal pattern of interaction may have changed, as Malamah-Thomas illustrates (1987, p. 91).



The attitude of S6 seemed to underline the way in which traditional teaching relies heavily on a hierarchy between teacher and student. As S6's teacher was authoritarian, S6 may have avoided asking him questions directly, but instead consulted his dictionary. In Japan, the students also tend to put questions first to their neighbours, not the teacher. This sense of hierarchy may have hindered this student from asking the teacher questions before consulting a dictionary.

I asked more questions about group work:

I: When nobody could understand what the native speaker of English was saying, what did you do in your group?
S6: We asked everyone else in the group, saying "What did she say?"

I: When you don't understand what a native speaker of English says, what would you do?

S6: I'd say, "I beg your pardon?"

I: In your group, there was one student who wore a yellow shirt. Do you know him?

S6: Yes, I do.

I: You were trying to interpret in Japanese what the native speaker of English had said to him. Why did you do that?

S6: Oh, he did not understand at all what she was saying and could not follow the conversation. He asked me to translate it.

This exposes some problems. When students do not understand what a native speaker of English says, they tend to look at each other in the hope that one of them may have understood what was meant, but they do not ask the native speaker of English to repeat it. If nobody understands, there will be a breakdown of communication as they become silent and do nothing towards their tasks. Being silent may be one of the strategies which they employ, so that teacher may notice that the students are not working as a group and then may come over and help them to understand and carry out the tasks. For Japanese students, it is difficult to ask the teacher a question, since they have been trained not to ask questions in front of others. They tend to ask the teacher individual questions later or privately after class.

The weaker student in this case asked the stronger student to translate into Japanese so that he could join in the tasks. The weaker student solved his problem by asking his classmates for help, but not his teacher. S6 then took the teaching role towards the weaker student which the teacher himself was not taking. In educational settings, there are two independent hierarchies of status among students: 1) associated with grades and competence, and 2) associated with "social skills, physical prowess, ability to defy authority and other emotional capacities that have little direct relationship to academic learning" (Luft, 1998, p. 181).

Without the teacher's help, the stronger student seemed to cooperate with the weaker one so that both could perform the tasks. Instead of asking the teacher for help, the weaker student asked the stronger one, who had understood more, to translate what the American student said. He was acknowledging S6 as a more competent student and, at the same time, in observing the traditional teacher-student relationship, was ignoring the help which a non-traditional teacher might have offered. For one thing, the stronger student, however strong he was, was undeniably more likely to make a mistake in his advice than the teacher.

When I was observing the group work, I noticed that there was an excited, cheerful male student in one group, who suddenly became silent. I wanted to find out what had made him do this and whether the problem had been solved. I asked S6:

I: Okay. In your group, who was the one who communicated well with the native speaker of English?
S6: That's student O. He was doing well.
I: How did he try to communicate with her?
S6: He spoke broken English and used body language.
I: How about you?
S6: Me, no, I communicated with her very little. He was speaking all the time and I didn't have a chance. (with a smile).
I: Oh, I see. He was talkative, wasn't he?
S6: Well, he was, but I do not know him. Today is the first time that he and I have been in the same group.
I: Only once, O looked in a bad mood. It looked as though he had got angry. What happened to him?
S6: Ah, O told the native speaker of English, maybe as a joke, but he said in English "I give myself to you." She did not like this and commented, "He is foolish." He got angry. It was a joke on his part, I guess.

O seemed to be trying to communicate with this foreign student, but what he said in English made her angry and the other members sympathized with her. This happened before the members of this group seemed to have got to know one another. Dörnyei and Murphrey (2003, pp. 14-15) mention the difficulty posed for many learners by the process of group formation, because at first they do not know much about the others in the group. They feel

anxious, frustrated, competitive, inferior, afraid of the unknown, unable to speak and unattractive. They have to deal with the others in the group; what made things worse for the group I was observing was that they had to get to know this foreign student despite their poor communicative and language ability. Without dealing with these conflicts, O may have blundered into saying something which should be said only in private, translating his meaning into the English phrase, “I give myself to you.” He may have been trying to encourage the group or improve the atmosphere by his broken English. This was why S6 thought that O was making a joke.

Acceptance simply does not occur without knowing the other person well enough. Enemy images or a lack of tolerance very often stem from insufficient information about the other party which, when left as it is, can grow into escalating ‘cold war’ tendencies and bullying (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p. 20).

If the teacher had given more emotional support to the students as he was monitoring the case, he could have solved this problem, encouraging O and the foreign group leader and reconciling them. The members of this group could once more have been friendly towards each other, using their intellectual abilities to build cohesiveness in the group.

Friendship and cohesiveness are part of all classroom groups. Classrooms have a hidden world, which at times too painfully reflects the attraction and hostility among peers that influence the self-concepts and academic performances of the individual students...At the “bottom line” we know that students with emotional support from friendly peers use their intellectual abilities and express interpersonal empathy more than do students who are rejected by peers...Cohesiveness is a characteristic of a group and differs from psychological feelings of inclusion or attitudes about involvement. A cohesive classroom group is composed of students who actively support one another (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001, p. 115).

4.4.7 Main findings from this class

Throughout this class observation, it was apparent that the behaviour of this authoritarian teacher was exerting a negative influence on the students' interaction. Indeed there was virtually no teacher-student or student-student interaction. During the first part of the lecture, he tried to control the flow of the lecture and the content, ignoring students' feelings and opinions. I am afraid that if teachers like this one do not change their approach, their students will surely lose their motivation to study English. As a result, some of them may stop coming to class, come late for class, talk with their neighbours, or sleep during class. In addition, this teacher would, I think, benefit from using a wider range of teaching methodologies. The one-way lecture system produces poor interaction between teacher-student and student-student. After the 5 foreign students were brought into the groups, the students in them appeared to be much happier than in the first part of the lecture. Even with their poor English ability, the students in the groups shared their opinions and thoughts with one another and cooperated to carry out the tasks.

As for group work, at first, the students appeared to have a fear of the unknown foreign students. It was very interesting then to observe how the groups gradually began to cooperate. Although the teacher had divided the students into groups without giving roles, in each group, surprisingly, someone started to discuss what to teach the foreigners to help them speak Japanese. After that, the members of groups were able to do the tasks under the foreign group leaders. This means that someone had taken the initiative voluntarily to begin the tasks after they had all looked at each other, expecting someone else to take the lead. If teachers wait long enough for the Japanese students to choose their own leaders, the students will probably be able to decide for themselves. Sometimes teachers seem not to believe that students can decide by themselves what to do and for this reason they impose group leaders

on them. But it is important to allow enough time to let the students take such decisions. Lack of interaction between teacher and student probably causes the teacher to look down on students' abilities.

After the students had got over their fear of the unknown members in their groups, they seemed to build up friendships and to show their feelings and opinions by nodding, smiling, giggling, and asking for help from the rest of the group. Both the foreign students and the Japanese used similar strategies to interact, such as using bilingual dictionaries, drawing, pointing to pictures, speaking little phrases of Japanese and English, looking at each other to make sure they were understood, using gestures and simply listening. These strategies seemed to influence group dynamics positively; by the second part of the class they were interacting well.

As for speaking perfect English, what Ngar-funLir and Littlewood (1997) say was borne out in the classes which I observed. If teachers are empathetic, they will be able to manage students' feelings, and create a safe climate in which to risk making mistakes. If teachers are creative, they can introduce different types of English to the students, including English with mistakes. Here the teacher's choice, dictated by personal qualities, seemed to influence interaction, and therefore, by extension, may have had a detrimental effect upon learning.

As for the case of student O, whom S6 mentioned in the interview, he is a good example of someone who finds the process of group dynamics difficult and thus has a negative influence on group work. At this point, a little help from the teacher in smoothing the group dynamics would have been valuable, to save O's face and help him to enjoy learning in this situation.

A teacher's sensitivity to individual students will help to improve group dynamics.

4.5 Private university class 3

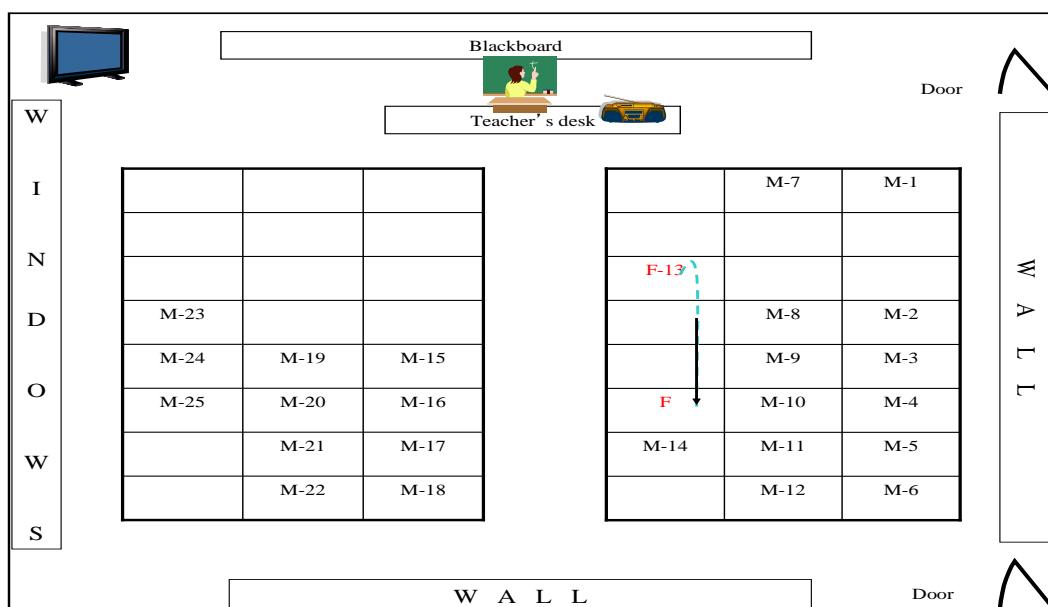
This class consisted of 26 freshmen (25 male students and only one female student) majoring in economics. On 3rd June, 1999 at 1:00 in the afternoon. I recorded this class on video-tape, with the teacher's permission. They met once a week in a traditional classroom with a blackboard, a teacher's desk which was higher than the students' desks and a television. The teacher, who held a master's degree in TESOL and had taught English for three years, taught "English I" and had chosen its textbook. She was a part-time English teacher.

4.5.1 Observation of class 3

The teacher brought a cassette tape recorder into the classroom. The students' desks were fixed to the floor and the chairs were attached to the desks, so they could not be moved around. This sort of furniture is typical of university classrooms in Japan and makes it impossible to have group activities; however, teachers can use pair-work activities instead.

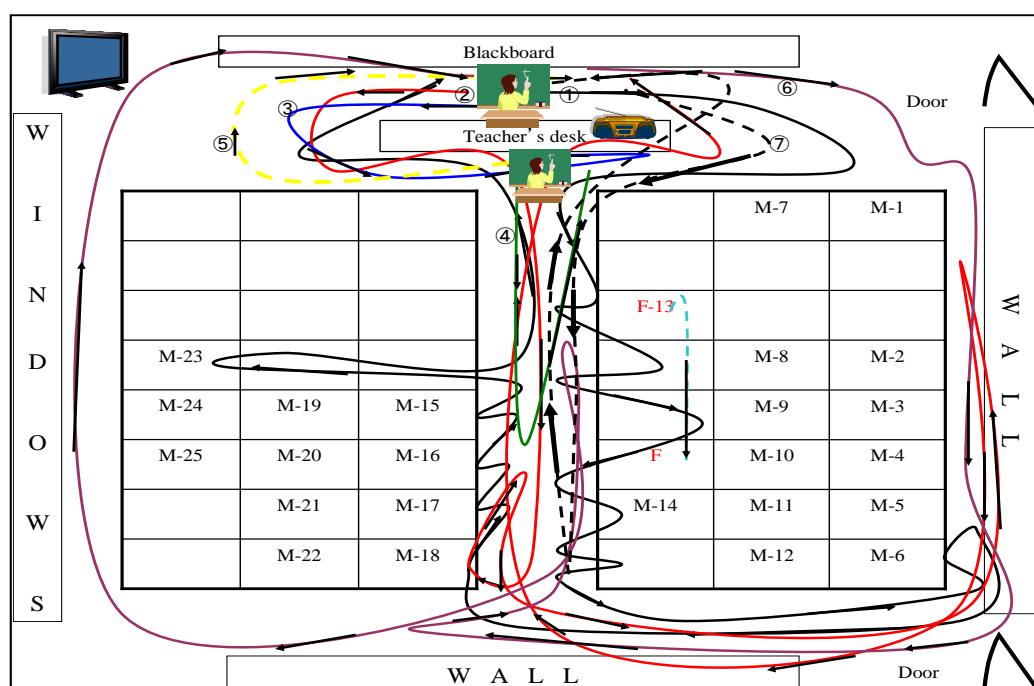
The seating arrangement is shown below.

Figure 4.7 Seating arrangement



On the day when I was observing, the Japanese teacher started the class by returning the answer sheets from a previous class to the students one by one, calling out their names as she did so. She spent about 9 minutes returning the papers to the students and explained how she had graded their answers. Since the students were at their desks she walked around to hand the papers back. She then used the blackboard to help explain the tasks which the students would do next and then she wrote the answers on the board so that the students could write down the correct answers in their textbooks. Again she asked the students one by one the questions which had been in the quiz, but some students could not answer in English. The questions were; “Where are you from?” “What’s your nationality?” “What your native language?” “Where are you from in Japan?” Then she instructed them to finish their next assignment by June 10th. She spoke Japanese slowly and very often said “Well...” or “Let’s see...” as she gave her instructions. Figure 4.8 shows the route taken by the teacher when monitoring the students.

Figure 4.8 The route taken by the Japanese teacher when monitoring the students



The lesson being taught was on basic grammar, using the verb “to be”, and preposition “from” She turned on the tape recorder for a few minutes so that the students could listen to the spoken English in the textbook, and then stood at the teacher’s desk for 26 minutes. She explained in Japanese how to do the task and sometimes wrote on the blackboard. The students looked at their textbooks and kept quiet, except for two students sitting in the back row, who were talking to each other throughout. The teacher called on each student to answer and went on to the next if a student could not answer. In Japanese language classrooms, Japanese English teachers tend to call individual students by name from the class list, but they seldom invite volunteers to answer. Hence, students are aware who will answer next. As they wait for their names to be called, they often try to get the answers from their neighbours without finding them for themselves, but teachers tend to be happy enough if a student can answer their question. Teachers seem not to mind who has done the work of finding an answer.

Seventeen minutes later, two students entered late. The teacher seemed to be happy to have them and told them to sit down. She did not ask why they were late for class. One student slept at his desk. She did not seem to notice him. Later the teacher woke up a different student and said to him, “If you want to sleep during class, go home.” This student did not reply but did not fall asleep again. However, some university teachers in Japan do not mind students’ sleeping in class. At least, they prefer to have students’ sleeping in class to students who chat with their neighbours, because the former do not interrupt the teaching and learning. This is why some teachers allow one thing but not the other. Teachers tend to welcome silence as they lecture. This may also be the reason why teachers do not invite any

questions; such an attitude appears to symbolize their one-way communication. As a result, students study for themselves in class and do not build cohesiveness in smaller groups, even though a class is a big group in which to learn English. Without small groups it is difficult to have face-to-face communication between teacher and student or even student and student. Schmuck and Schmuck define a group as possibly a collection of interacting people with some reciprocal influence over one another (p. 29).

After about twenty-seven minutes had passed, one student left the classroom. So the teacher herself partnered the other member of his pair. The teacher did not say anything but nodded to the student who had left the room. For 32 minutes, the teacher questioned the students one at a time in alphabetical order. This is a typical way for teachers to get answers from students. One student argued with her when she asked him to bring out his dictionary (see Figure 4.9). He insisted that he would not bring it out because he had not used it. The teacher gave up arguing with him and went to the next exercise. Apparently, she could not deal with this problem with the student.

She often said to the students “Be quiet!” using the form proper for males in Japanese. I was surprised to hear this. The Japanese language has female and male forms and women generally use the female and not the male ones. I assume that this female English teacher was trying to show her status as a teacher by using this form of address and thus making the students obey her. The students quietened down for a little, but they always started talking again. This tells us that this female teacher, despite using male Japanese language, could not stop the students from chatting, because they were not afraid of her. If she had been a male teacher, their attitude might have been different. The students seemed to be good at knowing

how far they could go.

After one pair had finished working together, one of them went back to studying by himself and the other started talking to his neighbour. This student had studied by himself during the whole class, but the teacher seemed not to recognize this fact at all. For pair-work, the other student moved to sit beside his partner, on the other side of the classroom. Consequently, he had to stand all the time he was completing the task with his partner. After he finished it, he went back to his seat. One female student moved to be with her partner for pair-work. The teacher monitored the students and gave some instructions when students asked her. But there had been no questions when she was first explaining the tasks from her desk.

Whenever the students talked, she said, “Be quiet!” (“*Shizukanishiro!*” in Japanese) until the class ended (see Figure 4.9). She never asked why these students were chatting with their neighbours. She could perhaps have been more sensitive to her students, in which case more interaction could have occurred between herself and them. Though teachers may have sympathetic personalities and characteristics, their behaviour may exert a negative influence on students’ learning. Authoritative teachers may become an obstruction, but they can control the students who only want credits for the sake of passing. The students did the tasks one after another, according to the textbook. The teacher called on the students by name. One hour after the class had begun, she distributed the activity sheets for dictation and explained what to do. Some students did not understand the task and tried to get more information from their neighbours, but not from the teacher. The teacher was busy turning on the cassette tape recorder and looking at the textbook. Before the class ended, she collected the activity sheets and gave out the sheets for the day’s quiz.

The students tended to ask questions individually when the teacher came over to them; otherwise they asked their neighbours or friends. The teacher usually gave an instruction or an answer to each student who asked a question, but tended not to make them think about ways of finding the answer or of finding out themselves what they could do. No questions came from the teacher to make students think for themselves. This means that students probably did not have to think at all for themselves. For teachers, the lack of comprehension seemed to be a problem; but this could be lessened if teachers encouraged the students to reflect on how well they had understood the preliminary instructions before asking supplementary questions. This might make the students think for themselves and find their own solutions.

The teacher said nothing to the two students who had arrived late, even though they interrupted the flow of teaching and obliged her to repeat herself. Some of the students were allowed to sleep in class; since this did not hinder any teaching or learning, except theirs; neither the teacher nor the students complained about their behaviour. She did not give the students any opportunity or time to ask questions, but made them listen to her. Her teaching style was typical of Japan. Teachers want students to listen and do what they are supposed to do, so that the lessons can be taught as the teacher has prepared them. But this way of teaching does not let the students learn to take any responsibility for one another's learning or their own, or learn how to share opinions, or how to accept one another's diversity, or acquire any empathy. Rather, because they remain individual learners, they develop anxiety and stress.

A teacher is a group leader and facilitator and, to be effective, such people should have the following three attributes: empathy, acceptance and congruence (Rogers cited in Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p. 93). Congruence is a problematic attribute for teachers, however, because it compels them to admit their limitations. In Japanese culture, the students believe or expect that their teacher will know everything, so it becomes difficult for teachers to drop their know-it-all stance and be frank in this respect (p. 93). In Japanese classrooms, the teacher's desk is higher than the students' desks to symbolize the teacher's higher status or greater knowledge. Thus it also shows authoritarian distance. Moreover, in Japan, teachers should not bring their personal feelings into the classroom, though it is sometimes beneficial to be honest about one's feelings. As teachers hide their annoyance, disappointment or occasional lack of vitality, students tend to forget that teachers too are human beings. Indeed, students as a result may not learn to express or encounter feelings, opinions and the diversity of personality. This makes it hard for them to accept diversity in their classmates and teachers and causes them to learn independently, not cooperatively, in class.

This teacher did not appear to be able to establish a good rapport with the students and the classroom set-up was not at all suitable for group work. Her behaviour did not build any positive interaction between herself and the students, or between one student and another in the classroom. Figure 4.9 shows the structure of the lesson, revealing how little interaction occurred during class.

Figure 4.9 The timeline of the General English class on 3rd June, 1999

Time	Teacher	Student	Students
0:00:00	Returning the papers to the students one by one.		Some students chat with their neighbours while they wait for their answer sheets.
0:03:03	Teacher walks around.		
0:03:51		One student comes into the classroom. Another student comes into the classroom.	Two students sit down in the first row.
0:05:42	She explains about the writing assignment for June 10 on the blackboard.		
0:06:41		The third student comes in.	
0:07:01	Gives the answers to the quiz in Japanese. She speaks Japanese slowly. When she speaks, she often says, "Well".		
	Teacher asks the questions one by one, calling students' names.	One student answers in Japanese.	
0:11:49	She explains about today's lesson: be verb + from		
0:12:19	She turns on the cassette tape recorder.		Students look at the textbook quietly.
0:13:12	Teacher stops the tape and explains the task.		
0:17:50	Teacher calls on each student by name.		
0:19:10		One student cannot answer. Two students come into the class late.	Two students who are sitting at the back chat to each other.
	If a student cannot answer, she skips him or her and asks the answer to the other student.	A student takes a nap and wakes up at 0:21:35.	
0:22:30	The first exercise ends.		
0:23:35	She distributes the activity sheets for the pair work.		Students chat with their neighbours while the teacher distributes the sheets.
	Teacher wakes up one student and warns him, saying, "If you want to sleep during class, go home."	A student takes a nap.	
0:27:55			
0:26:14	Teacher makes up a pair.	One student goes out of the classroom.	They start doing the task.
0:31:06	Teacher stops the exercise and gives the answers one by one, calling each student by name.		
	She interacts with students.		Two students are still chatting.
0:33:44		One student argues with the teacher when she says that he should bring his dictionary, because he has not used it.	
0:36:10	She tells students, "Be quiet" using the male form of the verb.		
0:36:45	Next exercise starts : Geography quiz When she explains, she often says "Well..."		
0:38:30	Showing the map in the textbook at her desk, saying "Be quiet!"		
	Teacher reads the questions one by one and calls student's names in order. If a student cannot answer, she skips him/her. She sometimes gives some hints in Japanese.		
0:43:46	She says, "Be quiet" and reads questions.		
0:44:40	The next exercise: Where are these cities? She uses the same procedures.		
0:46:48			
0:49:54	Teacher calls Y to wake him up.		The same student still sleeps
0:51:11	She explains the accent of the word, "Egypt" and again, she says, "Be quiet" in Japanese.		The student wakes up.
0:53:01	Unit 3 ends and she explains Unit 4, saying "Be quiet!"		For a short time, students become silent but soon they start to talk.
0:57:16	She says, "Be quite and "Urusai! Shizuka ni shiro" in Japanese.		
0:58:25	She turns on the cassette tape recorder.		
1:00:57	She distributes the activity sheets for dictation and explains what the students should do.		Some students do not understand what to do and ask some neighbours who are sitting behind them in order to find what they should be doing.
1:04:48	She rewinds the tape for listening.		
1:06:11	As she listens to the tape and gives the answers.		Students mark their answers or correct them.
1:08:37	She teaches pronunciation: shirt vs. skirt		
1:09:58	She starts the next exercise: Fill in the chart.		Everyone does this exercise.
1:11:11	She collects the interview sheets and distributes new sheets.		
1:13:56		A student looks out of the window.	
1:15:32	She asks students for the answers one by one.		
1:16:16	She gives today's quiz.		
1:20:00	The class is over.		

4.5.2 Interview with the teacher of class 3

In order to answer the research questions; 1) What kinds of visible and invisible inter-member relations exist between Japanese university students in a language classroom, and how do they affect their learning? 2) How does the teacher's behaviour affect the students' behaviour, and what impact does it have on their learning? and 3) How might co-operative learning benefit learning in Japanese language classrooms? I needed to look for deeper information about visible inter- and intra-member relations in ELT classes. Therefore on 3rd June at 1:00 in the afternoon, I observed a class given by the Japanese teacher of English described above, in the same room, with her permission, tape-recorded this interview.

This teacher had taken a Master's degree at a US university in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. She had taught university classes in English for 3 years. She evaluated her four skills as being 'very good.' When I observed her class, she was teaching English in Japanese, using the textbook and the teaching methodologies of the communicative approach, together with grammar-translation (G-T). For lower level students, G-T is the best way to understand the context in English. She believed that the communicative approach is useful when students are learning English as a tool for communication. However, she made the point that word-by-word translation is problematic. I interviewed her in Japanese. "T3" stands for this English teacher and "I" stands for myself. I wanted to discover what she saw as problems.

I: Did you have problems today?

T3: Well, first, not only today, but usually students were talking and they tended to sit at the back. Those students do not have the motivation to study. I always have a difficult time trying to motivate them. I don't know about other classes, but during my class, one or two students always leave the room to go to the restroom. I do not like their attitude at all! (emotionally). As some were

leaving without permission, I said to them on the first day, “Please do not go to the restroom without permission.” I told them not to behave like primary school children but to get permission from me. After this, students told me when they wanted to go to the restroom. In every class, I have one student who wants to go to the restroom every time.

This teacher had a policy that students should go to the toilet before class. However, a few students did not follow her instructions. I suspect that these students make this an excuse to leave the classroom to smoke, to use their mobile phones, or simply to get a few minutes' freedom. I suppose that if she had specified to these students when to come back, they might have stopped making excuses to leave the room. The approach recommended by Hess may work for this case, that is, to make students responsible for their own learning, because this is the bottom line.

Teaching, of course, ultimately depends on the willingness of the student to learn: unless the learner takes some responsibility in the shape of active cooperation and effort, there will be no learning in spite of the efforts of excellent teachers. The realization that students must be responsible for their own learning is perhaps most applicable in the large multilevel class (Hess, 2001, p. 159).

When students monitor their own progress, this may encourage them to stay in class. Hess (*ibid.*) also says that the way in which we learn is connected to our built-in habits, our state of motivation, our moods, and our needs (pp. 159-160). He gives some useful ideas for helping students to be responsible for their learning and monitor their own progress, together with their own language learning potential. These ideas include:

- 1) Before a test, give out sample questions, asking students to work on these in small groups and to discuss their ideas with the whole class.
- 2) At the start of your course, you should elicit student concerns about language learning and about this course in particular.
- 3) Allow students to create study guides before a test.

4) Have students write their expectations of the course.

I think that 1) above is a good idea, and is implemented by some teachers in Japanese universities. I wonder, however, how many teachers ask students to work on them in small groups and to give time for the whole class to discuss them. More teachers should perhaps consider using this idea for their classes. 2) and 4) seem to me less good as ideas. It is difficult to ask the kind of student whom I observed their concerns about language learning, because the university insists on their taking English to pass the course requirements; and they cannot choose their teacher. But it might be useful to ask them these questions, just the same, since they imply that the students would take English even if it was not compulsory. Some of my weaker students told me that they did not understand why they had to study English. However, other students may write out their expectations of the class. 3) seems to be a good idea because good students make study guides for themselves. Weaker students or lazy students tend to take the quickest method of passing the tests – to copy answers from good students and memorize them. Making students responsible for their own learning is a new approach for teachers in Japan. The teachers who tend to spoon-feed their students are evaluated highly by classes and the students themselves believe that the teachers, not the students, are responsible for their passing the tests.

This teacher also pointed out some students who sat at the back and who did not seem willing to learn English. In fact, some students come to class simply to receive an attendance mark so that they may pass the course. These students know that the teacher can tell how many classes each of them has attended. Japanese students are accustomed from primary school to sit where teachers tell them. Lists of seating arrangements are drawn up for each school.

Therefore, when she arranges the seating, they should follow her instructions and sit in the front seats. She is the group leader for the whole class (Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2, p. 27) because the teacher is the one with authority in the classroom.

In this extract from my interview with the teacher concerned, I was trying to discover if she had strategies for teaching the unmotivated, poorly performing students.

I: What do you do when learners sit in class but have no motivation to learn English?
You know, there were some of those students (showing understanding for her feelings).

T3: You are right! (with a smile). There were some. You know, when I started to teach English, I used to be very impatient with these students, but now I've given up (laughing). If I am too strict, I am afraid that they may not come to class. I want them to come to class anyway and have fun. I hope they can learn something in class. At the same time, I am very frustrated or find it a struggle when students do not learn anything in class but they sit there and get credits for the course.

This teacher was struggling to know how to teach these unmotivated students who still attended class, but had found no strategies to manage their learning. Unfortunately, there are many such students in university classes in Japan. Before the students have enrolled for some classes, they have already lost the motivation to learn but they passively endure the class for the sake of earning credits. Through observing this teacher in class, I noticed that there was little interaction between her and her students. Her students were very inactive because she did most of the tasks herself. As Wright (2005) says, teachers tend to talk more in classrooms than many authority figures do and this applied to her as well. Though she said that her teaching methodology followed the communicative approach, in fact, the communication seemed to be mostly one-way: she asked questions from the textbook, and wrote the answers on the blackboard. Most English textbooks published for Japanese university students have ready-made questions printed in the textbooks. Teachers do not have to make up questions of their own which might be more suitable for their students. The

students write down the correct answers. Even if some of this teacher's students had not understood the questions, they did not have to answer them, because she later wrote the answers on the blackboard. It was structured as Q & A, but it involved very little interaction.

Despite the introduction of 'communicative methodologies', language teachers still talk a great deal, and studies reveal that this plays a significant role in teaching and learning. Teachers talking in the target language is an important source of learning input in contexts where the target language is not heard frequently outside the classroom, and where there is a shortage of resources (e.g. audio and video tape) (Wright, 2005, p. 369).

Feuerstein's theory of mediation may help to solve this problem. The key features of mediation are: significance, purpose beyond the here and now (transcendence), and shared intention (intentionality and reciprocity). 'Significance' requires all teachers to ask themselves what value a task has before they give it to their students because the teacher's role is to help students to discover the value of the activity to them (Williams and Burden, 1999, p. 70). 'Purpose beyond the here and now' requires a learning experience to produce learning which is more than the mere behaviour required by the task itself (p. 71). 'Shared intention' means that the learners should know what the teacher wants them to do by her/his clear instruction (p. 71). Therefore, Wright suggests that the language teacher should repeat instructions, or should ask a group to copy her/him while demonstrating what to do (p. 72).

In the next extract, I was wondering how T3 solved power-conflicts between pairs. I asked her:

I: When the students worked in pairs today, were there any power-conflicts?

T3: Well...I did not notice that today, but sometimes when I've had time, I've noticed power-conflicts. When a stronger student and a weaker student worked together, the stronger student translated everything into Japanese for the weaker student. If both of them were weaker students, they copied all the answers from each other.

I: What did you do?

T3: I tried to speak to them, asking "What are you doing?" I talked to them in Japanese. However, I could not watch them all the time. After I went away to

monitor other pairs, these pairs reverted to the same behaviour.

She seemed to excuse herself by saying that she had so many students that she could not watch each one. In a large class, clearly, a teacher cannot be everywhere at the same time; students vary greatly in language acquisition ability, age, literacy skills, attitude, personalities, backgrounds, genders, many opinions, world-views, values, as well as experiences and style of learning. So, if teachers can pair students up with due consideration to these differences, pair work will enhance learning. However, this teacher seemed to have no strategies for solving this problem. Her students may have learned very little, because they do not cooperate well. Their strategy was to copy their answers from one another. As teachers feel frustrated or trapped in classroom management, Hess introduces the following principles for coping with large multilevel classes (pp. 7-15): 1) postponement; teachers have struggles from time to time throughout their career, but the next day they give a good lesson; 2) variety, which is very important in stimulating interest within large groups of students because they cannot concentrate on any single activity for a long time; 3) pace, for without correct pacing, teachers can lose control and make some students either bored or frustrated; in a large multilevel class such students turn into troublemakers and distract the more conscientious and more motivated ones; 4) interest, since when students lose interest, they cause trouble or create the kind of distraction that will focus on them rather than on the lesson. There are three fundamental aspects of creating interest; arouse student curiosity, tap into meaningful existential questions and make students' lives more challenging; 5) collaboration; with this, students participate more, they learn how to compromise, they negotiate meaning, and they become better risk-takers and more efficient self-monitors and self-evaluators (2001, p. 10). Hess suggests that students must learn to use one another as language resources (p. 10). The strategies which he recommends for collaboration are: *Group work*, in which students

complete a task together; *Pair work*, in which students share ideas or quiz and drill each other; *Peer review*, in which students analyze and comment on one another's written work. *Brainstorming*, in which students contribute ideas on a single topic; *Jigsaw activities*, in which students each contribute different aspects of knowledge to create a whole; *Collaborative writing*, in which a group of students collaborate to create a piece of writing, such as a letter of advice; *Collaborative community projects*, in which groups of students investigate an aspect of the community and later report on it; *Group poster presentations*, in which groups of students create a poster which demonstrates a topic, an issue or a problem; *Buddy journals*, in which students write on possibly assigned topics to a classmate or a student in another class or school and periodically exchange and react to each other's journals. When T3 used pair work, she could perhaps have prepared more creative activities, not simply finding answers and writing them on the blackboard; 6) individualization. It is important to provide opportunities for students to work at their own pace, in their own style, and on topics of their own choosing; 7) personalization. In a large class, students may easily believe that they do not count and there is no point in expressing their opinion, because other students not interested in their views. Therefore, it helps these students to give them a chance to share their opinions, to talk about their future plans and ideas on important issues; 8) choice and open-endedness. Open-ended exercises allow students many possibilities for choosing appropriate language items and gearing the exercise to their own level of competence; 9) setting up routines. This helps teachers to avoid many of the problems of management. Teachers and students all bring different personalities into the classroom and they all need the comfort and stability of established routines, yet teachers should also be flexible enough to change or challenge the procedure; 10) enlarging the circle. Though the teacher wants to involve as many students as possible, only a few students tend to participate.

The teacher does not know whether the quiet listeners are passively participating or daydreaming. By enlarging the circle of speakers, s/he avoids many of these problems; 11) question the kind of questioning being used. Certain questions bring out the liveliest responses and keep the entire class awake, such as

- Questions beginning with *Why* or requests beginning, *Could someone explain to me how...?*
- Questions to which the teacher doesn't know the answer.
- Requests for clarification and elaboration which start, *Could you please explain that?* or *Could you clarify what you mean?*
- Questions initiated by students and directed on to the whole class by the teacher. If T3 used some of Hess's principles for her troubled students, she might remedy her problems.

4.5.3 Interview with students from class 3

Next I interviewed one female student, S7, whom T3 chose by drawing lots because there were no volunteers. The student agreed to be interviewed by me. She was interviewed (in Japanese) on 3rd June at 2:50 in the afternoon, 1999 before I interviewed T3. Below I highlight some individual points from what she said. Her background is likely to have influenced her way of studying and her personality. I use the abbreviations "S7" for the female student and "I" stands for myself.

4.5.4 Interview with student 7

S7 had studied English from the 4th grade at a *juku*, (English Circle) for two years. Her Japanese English teacher had used English as the teaching medium, and S7 had enjoyed singing, speaking English and games. But at junior high school she had learned English by means of an English-Japanese dictionary used for every word in the lesson. At high school,

she had learned only pronunciation from the Japanese English teacher. She had not learned very much English and had disliked studying the subject. Although she had not got good grades at all at her junior and senior high schools, she had never stopped liking English itself. Though she had not attended the senior high school English class, she used to sing English songs at home. On graduating from high school, she had worked as a policewoman, with journalists in particular. After a 14-year gap, she wanted to take up English again and had decided to study at a university. She had never been abroad. Now, she wanted to learn English in order to work with computers because the computer books were written in English and she thought that the relationships with foreign countries were important for Japan. She confessed that her weakest skill was in listening.

In the first extract, I wanted to discover how she interacted with her teacher and classmates.

I asked her:

I: Did you ask your teacher any questions?

S7: No. It was difficult to ask questions in class.

I: Were you shy about asking any questions?

S7: No, I wasn't, but I did not want to interrupt the procedures in class. You know, if I asked a question, the teacher would have to stop talking or the other students would have to stop what they were doing in class, so after class, I looked up what I wanted in my dictionary. I usually marked what I did not understand in class. If I still did not understand, I asked the teacher individually after class.

I: Did you talk with your classmates in English today? Did you speak English with your partner?

S7: Yes. Pair work.

I: How was it?

S7: Um, I did not get any of the answers that I had expected from my partner. That is, he answered me only "Yes" or "No" in English. He did not answer in any sentences at all. I gave him some tips for speaking English, but he didn't follow them in his answers. He only said "Yes" in Japanese (laughing). I tried to speak using the sentences in the textbook.

S7 had strategies to solve her problems. These included, for example, marking what she did not understand in the textbook, looking things up in a dictionary, asking the teacher after class,

using sentences which she had learned that day from the textbook. However, when she worked in a pair, her partner did not try to speak English. As her partner did not cooperate with her, collaborative learning did not occur. If the teacher had produced more interesting questions, this unmotivated partner would perhaps have collaborated with her. Or he might have done so if his self-esteem had been higher. Equally, if the teacher had encouraged more interaction in class, S7 could have asked her for help.

In the next extract, I wanted to discover how S7 evaluated the teaching and the teacher's behaviour. I asked her:

I: What did you do in class?

S7: As the teacher translated everything into Japanese. I checked to see if my translation was correct or wrong.

I: When you were listening to the tape, what did you do?

S7: I was spelling out the words in my mind.

I: Did you have any difficulties in class or pair work?

S7: Geography is hard, because I have never been to a foreign country. I wrote the names of the countries in Katakana (one of the styles of the Japanese writing system).

I: Did you have any difficulties with your English teacher?

S7: No. She gave us Japanese translation.

I: When the teacher said "Quiet!" to the class, so often, how did you feel about that?

S7: Um, when I started studying at university, I had high expectations. So, these noisy students seem to me not here to study but to waste time and money. You know, for five years, I saved up to pay the tuition fees to study here.

I: How did you feel about what her use of "*Shizukanishiro*" (= Be quiet) using the Japanese male form of the word ?

S7: At first, I thought that she was hysterical. But no students at all stopped talking. If the teacher had been a man, he would have excluded these noisy students from class, wouldn't he?

I: How about her teaching style?

S7: Um, well, I think it is too kind and easygoing. For example, translating everything into Japanese. I am afraid that I do stop thinking for myself if the teacher does everything for the students. I'm afraid that she is too kind to us.

This teacher's behaviour or kindness might have hindered the motivation of students who wanted to learn English and she evidently did too much for them. T3 perhaps took her care-giving role too seriously. I understand her enthusiasm to teach these students, but at the

same time, she spoon-fed them. In many cases, Japanese students have been spoon-fed by their teachers for so many years that they do not try to study for themselves, or solve their own problems, and they never learn to negotiate with classmates whom they do not know well because the teachers make this unnecessary. The students need to collaborate with other students and with the teacher, so that they will be able to tackle their problems by negotiating with other people and respecting their values and opinions. The more the students collaborate, the more they will interact with each other and it is possible that such interaction will promote learning.

Cooperative learning is a highly effective classroom intervention, superior to most traditional forms of instruction in terms of producing learning gains and student achievement, higher-order thinking, positive attitudes toward learning, increased motivation, better teacher-student and student-student relationships accompanied by more developed interpersonal and empathic skills, and, finally, higher self-esteem and self-efficacy on the part of the students (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 245).

4.5.5 Main findings from class 3

This teacher did not appear to have good control over her classroom dynamics. She seemed to do too much for the students and did not give them enough opportunities to develop as group members. For example, she never asked why some students came late. This means that she allowed students to come to class at any time, perhaps as a safeguard against a poor attendance list, which would make her appear to the administration as a bad teacher. As a part-time teacher, she said that the students' evaluation of her is likely to be important for her if she wishes to continue teaching at this university. However, in terms of the students, this way of looking at things seems unhelpful, as they do not learn discipline. A parallel instance is that when some students asked to go to the toilet during this class, she never sought the real reasons why they wanted to leave the room. Another parallel is her supplying the answers

herself to her own questions, if the students did not reply after a short pause. The students then realized that they did not have to find the answers. As Hess argues, giving responsibility to the students encourages them to learn; she probably needed to give more responsibility to the students, for this would have assisted their active cooperation and effort to learn in her classes.

Her frequent exclamation of “Be quiet!” is equally indicative of her outlook and did not help her to gain respect from the students. S7 said that the teacher seemed to her hysterical. This reaction suggests that the students do not understand why they should become quiet. For a teacher, then, it is important to find why the students want to talk to each other, so that s/he can develop strategies to encourage learning. The teacher may then give students the opportunity to talk in order to share their opinions.

In the interview with S7, I learned that she hesitated to ask questions in class. For her, asking questions meant interrupting the flow of the lecture. The solution appears to depend on the teacher’s attitude: whether or not the students feel invited to ask questions. If a teacher sets aside some time for questions in class, this will bring more interaction between teacher-student and student-student.

4.6 Private university class 4

In the second extract from observations in private Japanese universities, a male British Canadian teacher was teaching students who were majoring in economics; they met once a week for 90 minutes. He had a bachelor’s degree in education and a part-time post teaching “English 1”. When I observed this class on 23rd April, 1999 at 1:00 in the afternoon with a

video-camera, there was only one female student and 28 male students. There was a blackboard, a teacher's desk, which stood higher than the students' desks and a television and doors at the front and the back. The windows were on one side with a wall on the opposite side. The desks were fixed to the floor and the chairs were attached to the desks. The classroom furniture was thus not suitable for group work.

4.6.1 Observation of class 4

Three students said that they had forgotten to bring their textbooks and workbooks with them. Some students do not want to spend money on textbooks, even though they are supposed to buy them. However, for a language class, students must bring their textbooks if they are to learn the language. Teachers often tell them in class to buy the textbooks. One of the students showed unwillingness to take part in the activities with the members of his group. The teacher repeatedly encouraged him to join the activities, but he showed no motivation to study this subject. This student pretended that he had a textbook, repeating what the teacher read. He was able to repeat these English sentences without looking at the textbook. Later, when I interviewed him, I found that he had studied in America for a year. The teacher was very concerned about his attitude and tried to motivate him; this was why he paid attention to him so often during the activities. In fact, it was clear that this student was frustrating his teacher. The single female student did not seem to have any difficulty in studying English with 29 male students.

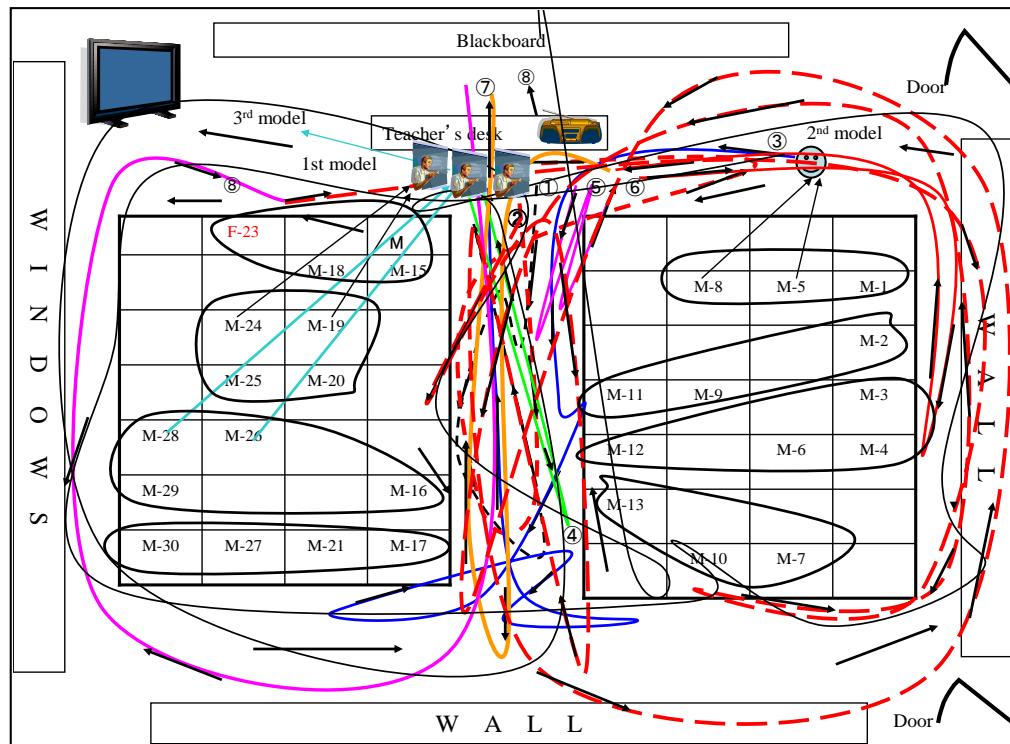
The teacher asked the students three times to stand up to do the tasks and used the students sitting at the front of the classroom as models, so that other students could understand how to do the tasks. He also made the students speak English individually with him, repeating the

same questions and asking them to repeat what he read aloud from the dialogues. Figure 4.11 shows that it took about 7 minutes to finish this activity. All the students had to wait until everyone had repeated the questions and answers.

Before the students started to work in groups, the teacher divided them into groups of three or four which in the figure are encircled by a black line (see Figure 4.10). As he was explaining, he said, “Quiet!” several times. In his classes, no students were allowed to sleep because he made them stand up when they practised speaking English. Some students had to turn around in their chairs to join a group, because the desks and chairs were attached to the floor.

Figure 4.10 shows the seating arrangement and the teacher’s movements during class, with the 8 groups, encircled with a black line.

Figure 4.10 Teacher’s movement and seating arrangements in the General English class



During the first activity, the students stood up and did the tasks with their group members. They seemed to be happy about practising dialogues with the group members, using the textbooks. The teacher chose two students to model the next dialogue in front of the classroom. They did not seem to understand at first what to do, but the teacher led them and the other students listened to them. Poor listening comprehension obliged these students to guess what they had to do and the teacher repeated the sentences slowly for them. After they finished the model activity, the students clapped. Then, the teacher asked the rest of the students to stand up for the task. Everybody stood up and did this task with the others in their group. In one of the groups, as mentioned earlier, there was an unwilling student, whose attitude the teacher noticed in his monitoring. This particular group had only one textbook and the other two students enjoyed doing this task in the group. These two students sat in the same row so it was easy for them to share a textbook. The unwilling student sat in front of them and thus had to turn around if he wanted to look at the textbook. He could have moved and sat next to the two who were sharing, but he did not.

The teacher chose two students to recite the second dialogue, which they were able to do without looking at the textbooks. These two students could speak English without looking at the textbook. The rest of the students clapped after the model conversation ended. The teacher again asked all the students to stand up for this activity while he watched them. The unwilling student did not speak English at all.

The teacher changed the dialogue, asking different questions and chose a third pair of students to serve as models. After their dialogue, the other students applauded. Then the teacher

made the students stand up for a third time. This time, the teacher went straight to the unwilling student to make him take part in the group work and worked on the dialogue with him for a short time. The other two students seemed to be a little surprised when the teacher spoke to this student directly. Later, the teacher came back to help this group. The unwilling student spoke a few words in English and one of the others tried to help him, but not the other. This unwilling student still did not show any motivation to speak English. He was hindering the other two students' learning at this point.

For the next activity, lasting about 16 minutes, the teacher pointed at one student after another and asked them to say something in English. Everybody spoke English in this way. The rest of the students listened to each student in turn and seemed to be interested in their work. However, the unwilling student did not speak English at all. The teacher waited for him to speak and finally he spoke a few English words, but not clearly. The teacher went on to the next student.

This time, the teacher did the model reading himself and the students repeated the words after him. The teacher instructed the students to use some gestures. He gave some examples. The students stood up to do the pair work. Most students were in pairs but two of the groups consisted of 3 people. The students enjoyed doing an exercise from the workbook which involved flipping a coin. The group with the unwilling student stood up with the single shared textbook; they seemed to be lost.

The teacher demonstrated how to play the game. The students in the groups with 3 or 4 members enjoyed playing it. The unwilling student finally joined this game and the teacher

came to interact with his group, trying to help each member to speak English as the game proceeded.

During the whole class hour, this student was a problem for the teacher and hindered the learning of the two other members of his group, but he finally joined in the game before the class ended. When the teacher explained the last activity, this student for the first time looked at the teacher and listened to him. In this group, one of the students, who had the workbook did this exercise, but the other two members could not do it until he had finished. The teacher again joined this group so that the other two students could do the exercises too. Since Japanese university students are unwilling to buy their textbooks, teachers usually photocopy parts of them so they can use them in lessons. Japanese students prefer to buy other things.

The student who had no textbook interrupted the work of his group and the teaching because he did not try to do the tasks and his teacher had to help or monitor him more than the other students. In fact, the teacher walked over to him during every activity. This student could not establish positive inter-member relations and intra-member relations in the class, but remained there passively. In the classroom, the students interacted formally and informally with their classmates and the teacher. In this observation, this student's attitude affected the classroom climate negatively. Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) describe 'Climate' as the condition in which the classroom activity carries educational goals, a condition which indicates the way in which a teacher interacts with students.

Classrooms with a climate of competitiveness, hostility, and alienation cause anxiety and discomfort and do not facilitate [the] intellectual development of many students.

Classrooms where students and teachers support one another facilitate [the] development of self-esteem and satisfaction of fundamental motives (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, pp. 40-41).

The teacher used pair-work and group-work in a classroom which lent itself to these activities. However, the teacher may not have known what group work entailed, because he simply grouped 3 or 4 people together and asked them to repeat the dialogues in the textbook. He did not encourage the students to share their thoughts and opinions with the rest of their groups or to write new dialogues with them. His groups contained no assigned group roles, either. In the classroom, group members should form a psychological and social entity, not a mere collection of persons. In class, students repeated the sentences as they were presented in the textbook, without changing them. They were not given the opportunity to create different expressions or choose different options. For beginners, this may be a good technique for learning basic sentence structures, but it does not teach students to learn or create other options. Therefore, students with no other experience of English will have difficulty in communicating with English-speakers. Speakers of English do not speak model English sentences.

Figure 4.11 shows the timeline of the lesson on 23rd April, 1999.

Figure 4.11 The timeline of the lesson

Time	Teacher	Student	Students
0:00:00	Taking attendance	Saying "Yes" or "Here" one by one	
0:02:21	Textbook page 3, Choral reading		Students repeat the sentences after the teacher.
0:02:48	He divides them into groups with 3 classmates, then asks the students to stand up.		Standing up for practice
0:03:24	Teacher divides students into groups and he monitors them.		
0:05:17	Group work ends Teacher invites two students for the models: T-S-S (1)		Students listen to them and applaud
0:06:49	Group work starts.		Students listen and applaud
0:07:58	He invites 2 students as models without textbooks(2) He monitors. He tells students to add some questions such as		Everybody stands up with the group of 3 students
0:08:18	"How old are you?", "Where do you live?", "What are your hobbies?". Volunteers (3)		Students practise.
0:11:48	Group work: Students learn each other's names. He reads the dialogue written in the textbook.	Each student practises with the teacher.	Two students volunteer All students stand up and practise.
0:13:14	Let students practise one by one		
0:20:45	He goes to the other side of the classroom.		The students repeat the sentences. They stand up and practise the dialogue in groups.
0:26:45	He models the reading.		
0:27:50	He monitors students.		
0:29:08	He explains the activity, using a coin.		
0:31:30	He makes a group of 4		
1:04:21	He gives the instruction to do the exercise from the work book and monitors.		Answer the questions in the work book.
1:17:07	He explains how to use the titles, Mr. Mrs. Miss and last name.		Students listen to the teacher.
1:24:00	The class is over.		

As Figure 4.10 shows, this teacher monitored students very often, but he did not interact with any of them individually, except the one who was demonstrably unwilling to learn English. During the class, the teacher controlled the students according to his teaching plan, and the Japanese students followed his instructions. His way of teaching was typical of a language classroom in Japan, with full control of the students, but no opportunity for the teacher to establish group cohesiveness or have any interactive influence on students' intellectual performance.

4.6.2 Interview with the teacher of class 4

I interviewed the teacher and one male student from this group on 23rd April, 1999 at 4:20 in the afternoon after class and had permission from them both to tape-record their conversations. I did so in order to learn what they thought their problems were and how they felt their

behaviour and intra-and inter-group relations would affect their teaching and learning. The teacher rated his four skills in Japanese as poor. He used the communicative teaching methodology for speaking and listening because he wanted the students to speak and listen to English as much as possible. He thought that they had practised grammar and reading for a long time, but this had not helped them very much. He mostly spoke English when he taught, but sometimes he spoke Japanese. He had taught English for 5 years at university, using textbooks.

In this interview, I was trying to find out what his problems and their solutions were.

“T4” stands for the English teacher and “I” stands for myself. I asked him:

I: What do you do when learners do not understand your questions?

T4: Um, ah, repeat, ah, sometimes [what] I said in Japanese. Ah, sometimes I asked other students to translate what I said (laughing). My Japanese is not good at all.

I: What did you do when the learners did not understand the activities?

T4: Demonstrate. Demonstrate by the other learners...they usually understand them. Actually, this year, the students are, ah, better than most, actually, because it's probably the first time that they've heard the lessons only in English. They've caught on actually very quickly, this class.

I: Yeah.

When I observed his class, I noticed that most students were smiling and apparently enjoyed learning English. As the teacher said, this was the first time they had had a native English teacher and they seemed to be excited about listening to, and speaking English. At local schools, the students seldom see native speakers of English in their classes, or learn English through the medium of English. The strategy which this teacher used when the students did not understand his questions was to ask other students who understood what he had said to translate it into Japanese, because his Japanese language ability is poor. I think that this strategy may sometimes work positively and sometimes negatively for the students who are good at English, because earning the respect of other students probably motivated them to

learn English more; however, some students may envy them. At Japanese universities, some teachers ask the students who are good at the subjects to help the weaker students. We call these the student assistants. In a large class, these students can help the teacher. For the students, this system probably makes it easier for students to get help, since it is easier to ask another student than to ask the teacher in front of the class. They can bring up their own problems individually. I too sometimes ask the stronger students to answer the questions of some weaker students when I am busy with others.

Using demonstration appeared to work for the weaker students who could not understand what the teacher had said. As their listening ability was low, demonstration helped comprehension and the students could then attempt the tasks. When they compared their pronunciation with that of other students, they might have increased their sense of security because the overall standard is much the same.

Dörnyei and Murphey (2003, p. 109) says that modelling is one of the most powerful ways of teaching in language classrooms, and he defines ‘near peer role models’ (NPRMs) as peers who are close to the learners’ social, professional and/or age level, whom learners may respect and admire (p. 128). He lists three modelling role behaviours; newsletter, special topical videos, and language learning histories. Language learning histories can be applied to this extract.

Language learning histories, journals and diaries have become rich tools for many teacher educators and researchers (e.g. Bailey *et al*, 1996: Schumann 1998). They are also excellent material for our students, not only to produce but to read and model, similar to the student newsletter...These provide students with intensely relevant and interesting information, level-appropriate reading material, as well as strategies, beliefs and attitudes that can be easily modeled because of the similarities between the writers and readers (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p. 132).

Students pick up some learning strategies: finding one's own way, using mnemonics, making errors work, being creative, using one's linguistic knowledge, letting the context help, learning to make intelligent guesses, learning some lines as wholes, learning formalized routines, learning production techniques, and using different styles of speech (Malamah-Thomas, 1987, p. 77). Watching a demonstration helps the weaker students to guess what they should do and this teaches them something. The most important thing is for them to be in the classroom.

I went on to ask this teacher:

I: What do you do when the learners don't understand the content?
T4: Um... Try to explain in English first, and, ah, when they didn't understand, either in Japanese or ask another student who understands.

Here, I found that he used some good students as mediators between him and the weaker students. It seemed to work in his class that one student should explain what he said in Japanese to the weaker students. The good students were probably more motivated to learn English, because they could then help other students. With the teacher's poor command of Japanese, he conscripted the good students to help the weaker ones so that every member of the class knew what to do.

In the next extract, I wanted to know why this teacher concentrated on the same student for some time in class and how he solved the problem which this student presented. I asked him:

I: Did you have any difficulties teaching English today?
T4: Not really. There were the three students who hadn't bought textbooks...would have been obviously... those three students didn't work very hard. They needed the textbooks.
I: One of them was my interviewee (laughing).
T4: Right, right (laughing). And he answered his telephone in class! Did you see

that?

I: No?

T4: Yeah!! He, he was, ah, he had his...

I: A mobile phone?

T4: Yeah!

I: Oh, I didn't know that!

T4: Yeah! He was, he, ah, held up the paper in front of him. I was angry at him.

I: Oh, that's why. I thought he was shy when I focused on him for the videotaping.

T4: Oh, no. He was talking on the telephone.

I: So, you scolded him.

T4: Right.

I: When you scolded him, how did he react to you?

T4: Just, "Oh, sorry, sorry. I can put the phone away." Right... Yeah, if he had had the textbook, he would have been concentrated more. If they don't have textbooks, they can't do anything.

I: They can't do anything, yeah. One of the boys told me, "I'm sure we need the textbooks," in Japanese (laughing) because he couldn't do anything during class.

T4: Right.

I: What do you do when the students don't participate in class?

T4: Well, today, mostly they were pretty good. Sometimes, if they are not doing some pair work and they are talking to each other in Japanese, or they are NOT talking in English, I join in the pair-talking with them.

I did not realize that this student had been using his mobile phone because he was holding up his paper in front of him when I videotaped this class. The classrooms are crowded and the minute-by-minute dynamics of the classroom occur as a result of the students' different interests and abilities. Many things happen quickly and simultaneously. Different students do different things, which inexperienced teachers may easily miss. For example, while some students were doing the tasks, other students who had finished started to talk with their neighbours or fell asleep at their desks, or they began to daydream until the teacher assigned further tasks. Wright (2005) lists the features of the classroom context (p. 89), quoting from Doyle 1986: 394-5; they are

1. Multidimensional: classrooms are home to many events and activities.
2. Simultaneous: many things occur at the same time; different people are doing different things in parallel.
3. Immediate: events in classrooms happen quickly as well as simultaneously.

4. Unpredictable: ‘classroom events take unexpected turns’.
5. Public: classrooms are public arenas – almost everything is visible or audible to most people present.
6. Historical: Classroom groups meet regularly over long periods and thus accumulate a common store of mutual experiences, routines, rituals and norms of behaviour.

These days, many students have mobile phones and they use them in class. This is one of the problems in Japanese universities. Using mobile phones distracts the teacher and the other students. I have heard of one teacher who collected all the mobile phones before the class started and returned them all at the end. This may be one of the strategies for encouraging a good flow of teaching and learning in class. Instead of collecting their mobile phones, I use them for the conversation activities. They have to practise a dialogue over the phone with their partners. This has worked during class. I monitored them to see if they were speaking on the phone in English or not. After this, they mostly stopped using their mobile phones in class. I told them to delete their partner’s private telephone numbers after this activity. However, some students still used their mobile phone from time to send text messages outside the class, but I forbade this also, because it distracted everyone.

During this interview, I was surprised to hear “Not really.” when I asked whether he had had difficulties today. He might have forgotten how often he scolded the student who used his mobile phone during the activities. This student was in fact a troublemaker in this lesson. Or, when the teacher was monitoring, he may not have been paying enough attention to each student, but simply walked up and down between them.

4.6.3 Interview with student 8

Next, I interviewed S8, the student who had caused such difficulties on 23rd April at 2:50 in the afternoon in a classroom. He gave his permission for me to tape-record his interview. When he was a sophomore at high school (he had attended two private sister schools), he had stayed for the first time with a family in New York State (East Hampton) in America for two and a half months as an exchange student. He had studied with twenty American students in class. He did not like studying English, but during this visit, he had learned to understand what Americans were saying. At high school, he had scored his listening and speaking as 4, his writing as 2 and his reading as 3. He had enjoyed studying in a group. On the day when I observed his class he had not asked his English teacher anything, because he had understood it all. In this interview, I wanted to discover his problems and how he solved them. I interviewed him mostly in Japanese. “S8” stands for this male student and “I” stands for myself. I asked him:

I: Did you have any difficulty in speaking to your English teacher?

S8: No. But, I thought he was quick to get angry because he said “Quiet!” “Stop!” just like American teachers. This English teacher reminded me of them.

I: How did you react with him when you heard him saying “Quiet!”

S8: I just became quiet (laughing). Being quiet worked.

Though teachers tend to say “Quiet!” in class, it seems not to work for long because the students soon start to talk again. As he pointed out, the students may think that teachers easily get angry without telling them why they have to be quiet. There are certain common moments of unpleasantness when the students get to know a teacher’s personality and style, because the students test the limits of acceptable or desirable behaviour for the teacher. Even when they have learned these limits, the same negative occasions may arise, because it is tedious for them to be always on their best behaviour in the social interaction during their first few language classes. Dörnyei and Murphey give a list of students’ discomforts (p. 15),

- general anxiety;
- uncertainty about being accepted;
- uncertainty about their own competence;
- general lack of confidence;
- restricted identity and freedom;
- awkwardness;
- anxiety about using L2;
- anxiety about not knowing what to do (comprehending).

In this case, the students may not have known why they had to be quiet and consequently had to ask their classmates to make sure what to do or find out what the teacher had told them, because of their poor listening ability. I wonder how much this teacher understood what the students said in Japanese, since his own Japanese is poor. Without understanding what was going on among his students, he may have been obliged to say, “Quiet!” over and over again.

In the next extract, I wanted to know how S8 solved a group interaction problem, so I asked:

I: When you were given a partner, did you know him? You know, the teacher chose the pairs.

S8: No, I didn't know him at all.

I: Did you talk to him in English?

S8: No.

I: What was your partner like? What did he do with you?

S8: He didn't do anything.

I: So, neither of you spoke. Why?

S8: He wasn't friendly. I just went through the model dialogue without him.

I: I noticed that you went back to your classmates several times right after the activities finished. I wondered why you left your partner so quickly. He looked lonely.

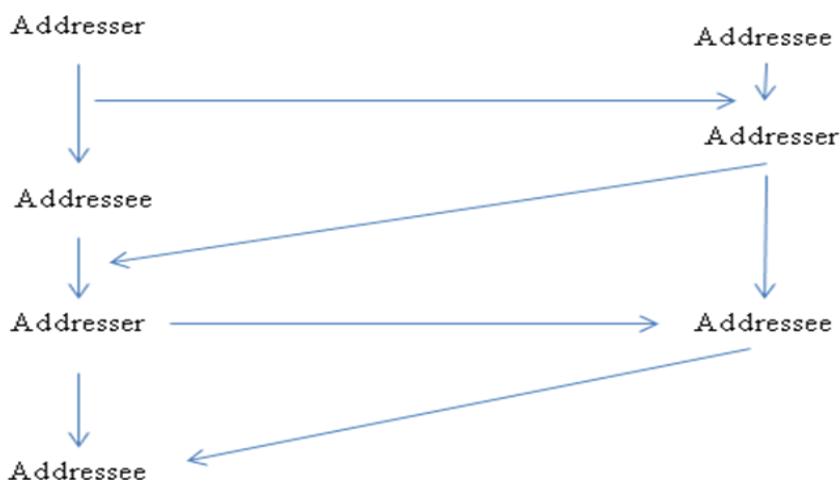
S8: Well, I did not feel comfortable to stay with him. He seemed not to want to talk to me. He didn't look cheerful.

I: Oh, I see. You didn't like that kind of person, did you?

S8: That's right.

This extract shows negative intermember relations. Both of the students in this dyad might have felt a fear of the unknown partner, conflict and anxiety, so they failed to collaborate to do the task. If they had been allocated a partner whom they knew, they might have done better. As Malamah-Thomas explains, in verbal interaction, the roles of the addresser and the addressee constantly change as the interaction progresses (1988, p. 37).

Figure 4.12 Verbal interaction



In normal everyday verbal interaction, the addresser and the addressee progress, as the figure shows, but in S8's case, he took both roles himself. So, the intended reciprocal exchange did not happen. If the teacher had stopped monitoring from time to time, and stood on the teacher's dais to observe the whole class, he might have noticed this conflict and, as group leader, taken care to persuade them to collaborate. S8's partner (a weaker student) may have felt some kind of disappointment and bad feeling because S8 (a stronger partner) ignored him in doing the task and left him alone. Feelings and attitudes also greatly influence learning. So, this weaker student surely needed some extra care from the teacher, but this had not been noticed.

The way that participants in classroom interaction feel about each other, and about the situation they are in has an important influence on what actually goes on in a classroom. Feelings and attitudes can make for smooth interaction and successful learning, or can lead to conflict and the total breakdown of communication (Malamah-Thomas, 1987, p. 29).

S8 lacked tolerance and empathy towards this weaker student and seemed to leave him alone, not trying to accept the differences between him and his partner. If the stronger student had tried to encourage this weaker student, they could have done the task together. The teacher, too, failed to offer help to the student who was more ignorant than his partner and the weaker student did not ask for help from his teacher. Johnson argues that student-student interaction may actually be more important for educational success than teacher-student interaction, because constructive student-student interactions influence students' educational aspirations and achievement, develop social competencies and encourage taking on the perspectives of others (1995, p. 112).

Here, I think that the two students' personalities may have been in conflict, but they should have realized that everyone in a classroom had a different personality, and should have learned to negotiate with others. Each student had equal rights. Consequently, S8, who had learned in America how important it was to express himself, should have taken a moment to allow the weaker student to have a voice in the dialogue. Not jumping in but waiting may be the solution in this case. Tsui (1997) suggests that the following factors are likely to affect students' behaviour in classroom interaction: 1) learning style: 2) language learning anxiety, which is related to students' self-esteem: and 3) cultural background (1997, pp. 187-188). The weaker student, who might have had lower self-esteem than S8, may have had learning anxieties in this pairing.

4.6.4 Main findings from class 4

In general, this teacher appeared to teach very well, using students as models, and using the stronger students to teach the weaker students. This approach went down very well with the students and helped build their confidence. He also encouraged a great deal of physical movement in the class, which kept the students awake!

As an example of this teacher's good practice, to cover his poor Japanese language ability, he used models and demonstrations so that the students, in particular the weaker ones, could understand what they had to do. Sometimes, he used good students as his assistants. The strategies which this teacher used seem to influence the creation of a good classroom climate in which the students could enjoy learning with their classmates. Using good students in this way appeared to increase the interaction between student and student.

However, there was a problem in this class. One student (S8) used his mobile phone during class; moreover, he did not have a copy of the textbook. In pair-work, he did the work by himself, apparently very intolerant of his partner; he made no effort to get acquainted with him but ignored him. S8 seemed to exemplify students' behaviour under competitive and individualistic learning conditions. The teacher tried to deal with the student but without success.

This is perhaps a good example of the type of 'negative intermember relations' shown in Figure 2.5, Chapter 2, above. As Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) argue, many Japanese students have worked in a competitive environment, but have not learned how to cooperate (p. 236). If this teacher had considered the different levels of proficiency between these two

students, he could have paired them up with others. Lack of consideration of the students' language levels appears to cause this problem and also allowed one student to show intolerance of another. Careful observation is required to prevent weaker students from being lost.

For the teacher, S8 was thus a trouble-maker, for whom he seemed to have no preventive strategies. But if the teacher had stopped the flow of his teaching for a short time in order to interact with S8 and find out why he was behaving negatively, it might have been possible to meet his needs. In the act of teaching, teachers tend to ignore students' feelings and opinions. Being empathetic, however, is one of the good teacher's hallmarks. Teachers' behaviour can impact on learning both positively and negatively.

This teacher also exclaimed "Be quiet!" repeatedly during class, even though this was ineffective. The students became quiet for a short while but it did not take long for them to resume their conversations. However, if a teacher stops saying "Be quiet" and joins a conversation or asks what they are talking about, this may be a better strategy than shouting at them. In this way, a teacher may find why his/her students are not studying in class.

4.7 Conclusions

These four English teachers at state universities and private universities, appeared to influence their classroom climates through their teaching styles, derived from their personalities, teaching methods, interaction and their authority (Chapter 2, Figure 2.3). First, these classroom observations appear to indicate that the teachers whom I saw may not have had a thorough grasp of what group work entails or how to use it positively in the classroom. As

we saw in Chapter 2, the model sequence for groups in the classroom is: 1) group formation, 2) transition (storming and norming), 3) performing, and 4) dissolution (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, pp. 109-110). Groups are formed through a process of attraction, friendships and acceptance. As these examples show, simply dividing students into groups does not necessarily lead to the development of group work.

I observed three different styles of teacher leadership in these sessions: authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001, pp. 233-234). The timelines (Figures 4.3, 4.6, 4.9 and 4.11) show what the teacher, any given individual student, and the remaining students were doing in the class. The more authoritarian teacher tended to occupy more time in talking and allotted little time to the students for asking questions or giving answers. Before the teachers divided the students into groups, they had very limited interaction with them or with their classmates. If the students had had the chance to interact with the teacher and the other students, more interaction would have occurred and this might have helped their learning. Johnson (1995) and others argue that teachers must control two aspects of classroom interaction if they want to encourage student/student interaction. First, they should attempt to control the ways in which learning goals are structured, and, second, they should control the ways in which conflicts among students are managed (p. 112). According to these researchers, what plays an important part in students' cognitive development is student/student interaction, so long as it is structured and managed appropriately by the teachers in the classroom. Good student/student interaction can cause cognitive conflict, and thus bring up cognitive restructuring and development. If it goes well, it can encourage the use of more exploratory language and informal learning styles and strategies among students. It can enhance students' abilities to work collaboratively, to

encourage collaborative rather than competitive social relationship among students, and to foster positive attitudes toward school (Johnson, 1995, p. 113).

According to the timelines, the students taught by these four teachers seem to have experienced only one-way communication. None of the teachers, apart from the Canadian teacher who was teaching at a state university, invited different opinions or answers from the students. On the surface, the three ‘non-interactive’ teachers seemed to teach well, but in fact, they taught the students according to textbooks which did not contain many interactive activities; in some cases the teachers merely summarized the content. It would perhaps have been better if these teachers had created their own teaching materials, which might have motivated the students to learn more. They could perhaps have prepared teaching materials which encouraged interaction between teacher and student and student and student. As a result, the students might have become active learners, motivated to learn in the classroom. As things were, they learned a kind of English which was based on questions in the textbooks to which they needed to find the ‘right’ answers, but they were not given opportunities to think up different answers for themselves. Moreover, in these classrooms, the students tried to look up unknown vocabulary in their dictionaries, rather than asking the teacher or their colleagues. This suggests that there was little teacher-student or student-student interaction and hence the learning which would result from such interaction was very rare. The three teachers seem to lack the techniques to develop students’ conversational competencies and talents, and the students often appeared to lack the will to cooperate in the classroom.

Second, I believe that some teachers may not know how to be good facilitators or helpers when they monitor groups of students; it would help them to learn. Most of them walked

around and rarely interacted with them. Even though a teacher's function is to show empathy, to be a facilitator, to care for students and to be a coach, they hardly ever stopped in their monitoring to listen to what the students were saying or what their problems were. The timelines show little interaction between teacher and the students. This means that the teachers talked too much to give the students a good chance to practise spoken English, because they wanted to finish all that they had planned to cover. Moreover, Figures 4.8 and 4.10 (teachers' monitoring) show that the two teachers concerned could not have monitored the students unless the students sat near the end of a row, because the classroom seating arrangements prevented it. The desks and chairs were attached to the floor and there was not enough room for teachers to monitor them. These classrooms, it must be concluded, are simply not suitable for group work. Students will work well in groups, but unless the teachers encourage the students to talk to them or express their opinions to the other group members or help solve the groups' problems, the teachers will build no rapport with the students nor encourage any rapport between them. More frequent interaction between teacher and student would have helped students' learning. As a group develops, its members cohere in tackling and completing tasks (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 138). But students who are unused to working with others who take a different approach learn more slowly, because they cannot co-operate with other group members, as Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) say:

Classroom groups begin at different stages, depending on the students' past experiences in school. Students who have previously experienced primarily authoritarian teachers will be at different skill levels from students who have had ample experiences in communicating with one another and in collaboratively working on improving their group work (p. 49).

Teachers as leaders and authorities can, however, influence group dynamics so that the

members become more tolerant and learn to work together. Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) argue that the behaviour of the teacher is a critical factor because persuasive teachers and participative teachers affect groups differently; persuasive teachers lack confidence in their students and make the students dependent, but participative teachers encourage a classroom climate which is informal, relaxed and supportive, and these teachers create independent students who work together (pp. 50-51).

Third, I observed that the students who were taught by authoritative teachers looked very serious and interacted rarely, either with their classmates or the teacher. However, they seemed to enjoy studying together in groups. There were admittedly some students who did not appear to want to participate in group work, because the teachers as they monitored failed to help them find answers to their problems or did not encourage them to join in the tasks; some students are not motivated to work in class unless the teacher gives them special attention. This shows how important it is for teachers to interact with the class, just as it is important for the group leaders to interact and engage with the group.

Fourth, it seemed to be useful to use the students as models for one another; I saw this when I observed the class at the private university taught by the Canadian teacher. Other students were keen to listen to them. As this teacher said, weaker students understood what the tasks were through the modelling of the more able ones; Murphey (2003) comments that modelling is one of the most powerful ways of teaching in language classrooms (p. 128). It is a useful activity because it helps weaker students not to lose face and benefits stronger students by motivating them to study more and be confident in helping other students. By using students as models, both the stronger and weaker ones can join the activities, because students,

whether of low status or high, are influenced strongly by the reflections of themselves which they perceive from their teachers and their classmates. There are two disadvantages, however: 1) how students feel about themselves is an important determinant of their behaviour toward others and 2) students with low levels of self-esteem in the classroom are apt to slip into daydreaming or misbehaviour (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, p. 37).

Finally, when it comes to group work, even though the Japanese English teachers in this study seemed not to know about group theory, they still encouraged the students to carry out the textbook tasks in groups. However, while observing English teachers and Japanese university students, I discovered that problems of inter- and intra-relations between teacher and students and between student and student still exist, and that this can have a significant impact on learning and teaching.

First, I saw that when group members could not establish positive inter- and intra-relations in a group, learning scarcely takes place at all. Dividing students into groups seems to be essential, however, in particular at the beginning. For example, S1 struggled to establish “promotive interaction” (Dörnyei, 1997, p.484), because she was in a group formed by students who had been co-opted into it unwillingly. Its reluctant members did not encourage each other or make it easier to carry out the tasks but argued with each other and lost heart, as a result of the lack of cohesion. What this group encouraged in its members instead was self-efficacy. If the teacher had acted as a counsellor to this group, each of its members could have encouraged the others, who were suffering from anxiety and competitiveness, and given them a sense of belonging, thus enhancing their learning. The amount of time which teachers spend with group members is also important for group cohesiveness. Therefore, it would be preferable if teachers grouped students more sensitively and changed the groupings

more often.

Between individuals a cohesive group can promote cooperation that enhances both individuals' efforts. On the other hand, lack of cohesion can bring about interpersonal friction and demotivation. At the group level, an effective group can enhance self-efficacy among its members. Effective cooperation in a cohesive group makes use of member diversity for the benefit of all. As a result of poor group functioning, members may experience apathy, inefficient learning, or even destructive psychological effects on the members that result in intense aversion to further learning (Leaver, Ehrman and Shekhtman, 2005, p. 135).

Second, I discovered in my observations that the personality of the group leader could influence his or her group members positively or negatively in tackling the tasks. There were two types of student leader: task specialists and socio-emotional specialists. Giving roles to the other members was vital for getting the tasks done and achieving the goals of the exercise, but the teachers whom I saw did not assign intra-group roles. Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) say that giving a role to each member of the group gives them security and saves time in carrying out the tasks. In this way students can learn interpersonal management and ways of adjusting to one another.

Role assignment has further positive effects. When students are unsure as to their roles, they can feel a lot of stress and they can also spend a lot of time figuring out roles in a group. Thus, giving them roles to start with is beneficial as it provides security and saves (usually awkward) time (p. 119).

As noted above, the teachers who had called for group work did not give roles to students; it would have benefited their classes if the students had known about the need for roles and had had their group roles assigned. Dörnyei and Murphey have a useful list of student roles (see p.119). Teachers who understand each role, supplying clear job descriptions and pinning assignment sheets of roles on the wall, make it easier to learn.

Third, I discovered that weaker students may feel ignored or inferior to stronger students in the group. For example, S8, who had studied English for one year in America, had been paired with someone to practise the dialogue, but he did it by himself, ignoring his partner. When S8 left him, the partner looked lonely. Another example occurred in a state university classroom. While the Chinese student and one of the Japanese students talked volubly in the group, the two other Japanese students kept quiet and one of them became angry. Such interpersonal relationships hinder group work or pair-work. As a result, a student who envies a stronger student becomes silent or gets upset, or withdraws from the group effort. Therefore, the group leaders chosen should have the three characteristics of an efficient facilitator, empathic ability, acceptance of the members and congruency (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997, p. 76). These characters help to build up positive intermember relations.

Fourth, I discovered in my fieldwork that some Japanese students never asked questions in class. I think this is because they have always been taught only to listen to other people. This may have inhibited them from asking the teacher questions and sent them to their dictionaries. One way to solve this problem might be for teachers to invite different answers or opinions and to give the students the confidence to express them. The teacher could perhaps call someone and wait for a while until he or she speaks up or give some hints in encouragement. If s/he gives an unexpected answer, the teacher could still praise this student in front of the other students. If teachers show how happy they are to hear a variety of different opinions and answers, the students will know that it is acceptable to answer in different ways. I also learned in the classes which I visited that some students wanted to speak only ‘perfect’ English and this constrained them from speaking the target language more often. However, if Japanese students were exposed to many kinds of English, they

might become more confident in speaking and not so fearful of making mistakes.

Fifth, I inferred from observing these students that they are accustomed to being spoonfed; teacher's traditional behaviour or overwhelming "kindness" appears to have lessened the motivation of students who want to express themselves in English or who wanted to express unorthodox opinions or answers. Meanwhile, the weaker students knew that they would get the 'right' answers later from the teacher. As a result of being spoonfed, the students whom I observed seemed not to want to learn how to cooperate with other students or how to negotiate with different values; they looked as if they feared unknown people, new things, conflict and competition. This may have hindered learning by causing negative inter-member relations in group work. Students taught in this way must find it hard to accept other people's values and opinions or learn to solve their own problems. They may perhaps remain stuck in a competitive and individual learning situation controlled by authoritative teachers (the old teaching paradigm of Chapter 2).

Finally, the evidence from the study suggests that since these students (and teachers) had not learned how to co-operate with other students or teachers; they seemed not to know how to negotiate with different people in groups or in pair work. In any case, the facilities in the classrooms which I observed were not adequate for group work. The desks and chairs were fixed to the floor and thus the students were not able to interact face-to-face. Teachers could not always get close enough to the students to find out much about the students' emotional needs and personalities. In traditional classrooms, designed for a wholly different pedagogy, it is not easy for students and teachers to cooperate, although cooperative learning has been found to promote a higher level of reasoning strategies and critical thinking than authoritative

teaching does. Orally summarizing, explaining and elaborating one's thoughts and ideas are necessary for negotiations, discussions, and communication.

Members of classroom groups understand one another by communicating verbally even though the individuals come from different social backgrounds and have different personalities (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, p. 81).

In many respects, from what I have seen in these classes, English education in Japanese universities still seems to belong largely to the Old Paradigm of teaching, at least as far as group work is concerned. Between the Japanese language learners whom I observed, there were signs of negative relationships which seemed negatively to affect their learning; as did the behaviour of some teachers.

Each student and teacher brought his or her values, cultures, preferences and opinions to the classroom. Teachers affected students, and vice versa, positively and negatively. The students needed to learn how to improve negative relations in their groups, for positive relations are essential to enjoyable learning. If the teachers had interacted more with the students and had encouraged them to interact with one another, they would have given them a sense of security and an atmosphere of safety in which to learn.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the questionnaire survey in which I attempted to take a quantitative approach to answering my research questions. The findings from the second part of the study are intended to complement and elaborate on those made in the first part of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS 2: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE STUDENT AND TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

5.1 Introduction

In order to answer research questions 4, 5, 6 and 7, I conducted a questionnaire study in Japanese university language classrooms throughout Japan. My research questions were:

- 4) How do Japanese university students themselves feel about the current interaction in Japanese EFL classrooms?
- 5) How do they perceive and deal with interaction problems?
- 6) Are there any gender differences in the ways in which the students perceive and deal with classroom interaction?
- 7) How do teachers perceive and deal with problems in Japanese university language classrooms?

As outlined in Chapter 4, I distributed and collected the responses to questionnaires from 793 Japanese university EFL students in 11 prefectures, and from 83 EFL teachers whom I had chosen at random from the membership list of JACET (The Japan Association of College English Teachers) issued in 2004. These data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively to interpret the results. In order to refine the data, I used space triangulation, to guard against parochialism. I also used methodological triangulation for the questionnaires. To answer research question 6, the data were analyzed using Mann-Whitney U tests and the

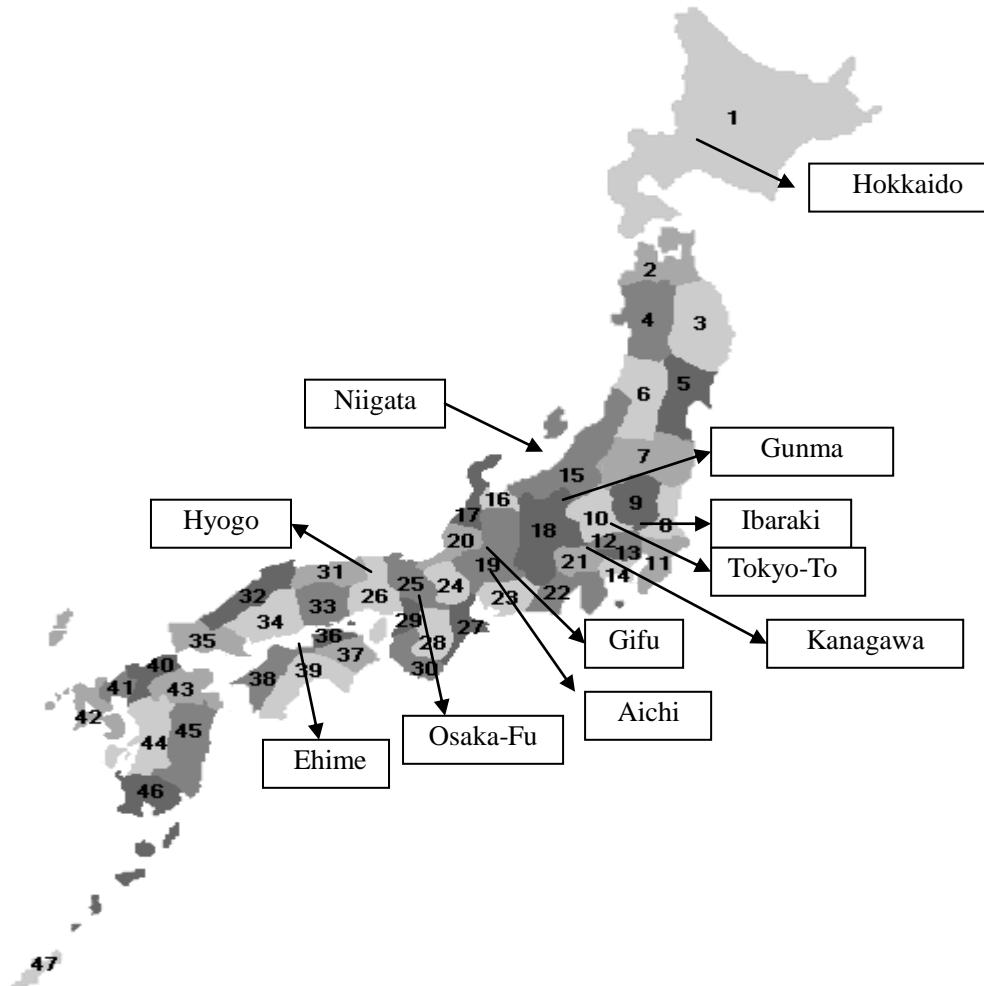
findings are illustrated with graphs to show frequencies and genders.

In this chapter I present the significant findings from these questionnaires. I begin (in sections 5.2-5.7) by focusing on the student data. After noting the demographic information about the students in the study, I analysed their responses, which revealed different categories of conflict and ways of dealing with them. I use these data to answer research questions 4 and 5, and I examine gender differences in order to answer research question 6. Then (in sections 5.8-5.9) I focus on the teachers' data. After providing the relevant demographic data, I discuss the teachers' responses to the questionnaire in order to assess how they perceive conflict within their classrooms, thus answering research question 7. By looking at the issue of conflict from the point of view of both the students and the teachers I hope to provide a fuller picture of how it is perceived and dealt with in Japanese university EFL classrooms.

5.2 Overall information about the students studying at universities and colleges

One thousand and thirty-five student questionnaires were distributed, from September 16 to October 20 in 2005, in the following 11 Japanese prefectures: Osaka-fu, Tokyo-to, Hokkaido, Ehime, Aichi, Niigata, Ibaraki, Gifu, Gunma, Kanagawa and Hyogo. Figure 5.1 shows the areas where the questionnaires were distributed. 793 students completed these questionnaires (387 Japanese male students, 3 non-Japanese male students, 387 Japanese female students, and 16 non-Japanese female students) making the response rate 76.6%.

Figure 5.1 Map of Japan



<http://www.japan-guide.com/list/e1002.html>

Although all the questionnaires were distributed in Japan, not all of the respondents were of Japanese origin. Apart from the Japanese students (774), some came from Brazil (2), Korea (2) and China (15). 552 students were university students and 241 were studying at 2-year colleges in various departments. 579 were in their first year, 102 in their second year, 93 in their third year and 19 in their final year; all were learning English as part of their course. Apart from a few who forgot to fill in their places of origin, these students said that they came to study at each university or college from different areas of Japan between Hokkaido and Kyushu and represent 25 different departments of study. For example, 137 students studied

Economics (17.3%), 104 students studied Engineering (13.1%), 102 students studied Child Education (12.9%), 66 students studied Global Business (8.3%), 58 students studied Home Economics (7.3%), and so on. 19 out of 793 students at university or college came from another country.

According to the chi-square tests, there was a significant association between gender and school ($\chi^2 = 296.6$; df=1; p<0.001). Table 5.1 shows whether gender difference affects their studying at schools.

Table 5.1 Gender * School

Crosstab

		School		Total
		University		
Gender	Female	169	234	403
	Male	383	7	390
Total		552	241	793

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson chi-Square	296.644(b)	1	.000		
Continuity Correction(a)	293.990	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	355.723	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	296.270	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	793				

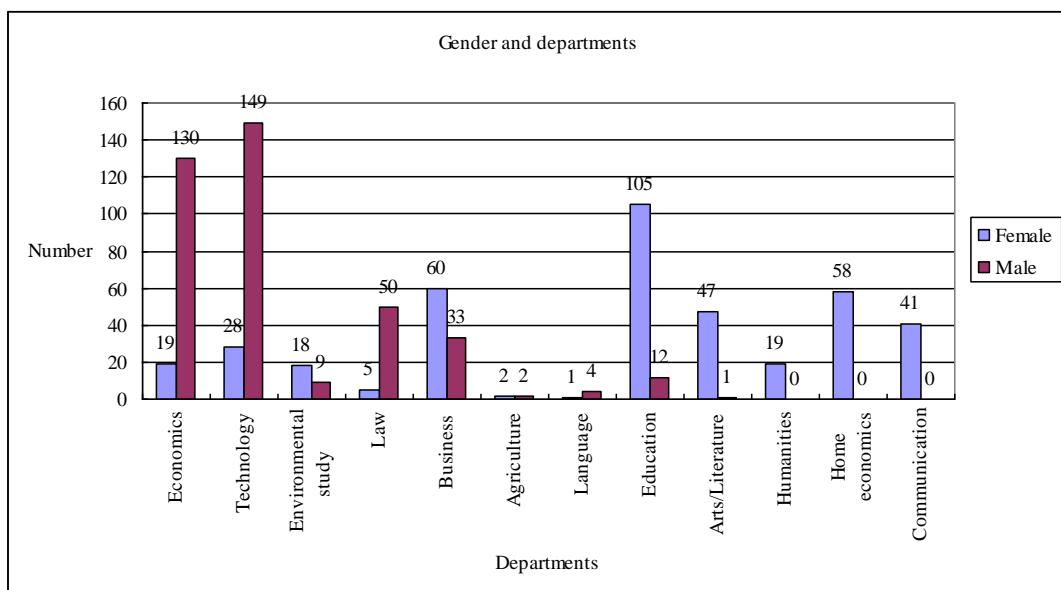
a Computed only for a 2x2 table

b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 118.52.

In Japan, more female students than male study at 2-year colleges and more male students study at university. People tend to think that girls do not need higher education. This may lead to parents wanting their sons but not their daughters to study at a place of higher education: parents want girls to have less education because Japan is a male-dominated society. Parents also often want their daughters to marry as young as possible, so as to

become housewives and mothers. Graph 5.1 also shows that female and male students choose significantly different subjects to study. For example, more male students study in technology/science departments than in the departments of economics, law, arts/literature and business. However, a new tendency is being found nowadays in the Japanese business world. This is for more women than ever to start a business, even though the most important roles for women have traditionally been those of housewives and mothers. Nowadays, women manage companies and have become more independent than in the past. The Japanese government seems to welcome this change and encourages companies and schools to promote talented women.

Graph 5.1 Gender and departments



In the following sections, I analyse my data in order to answer Research Questions 4, 5 and 6, all of which relate to the ways in which students perceive and deal with interaction in the classroom. The research questions are:

- 4) How do Japanese university students themselves feel about the current interaction patterns in Japanese EFL classrooms?

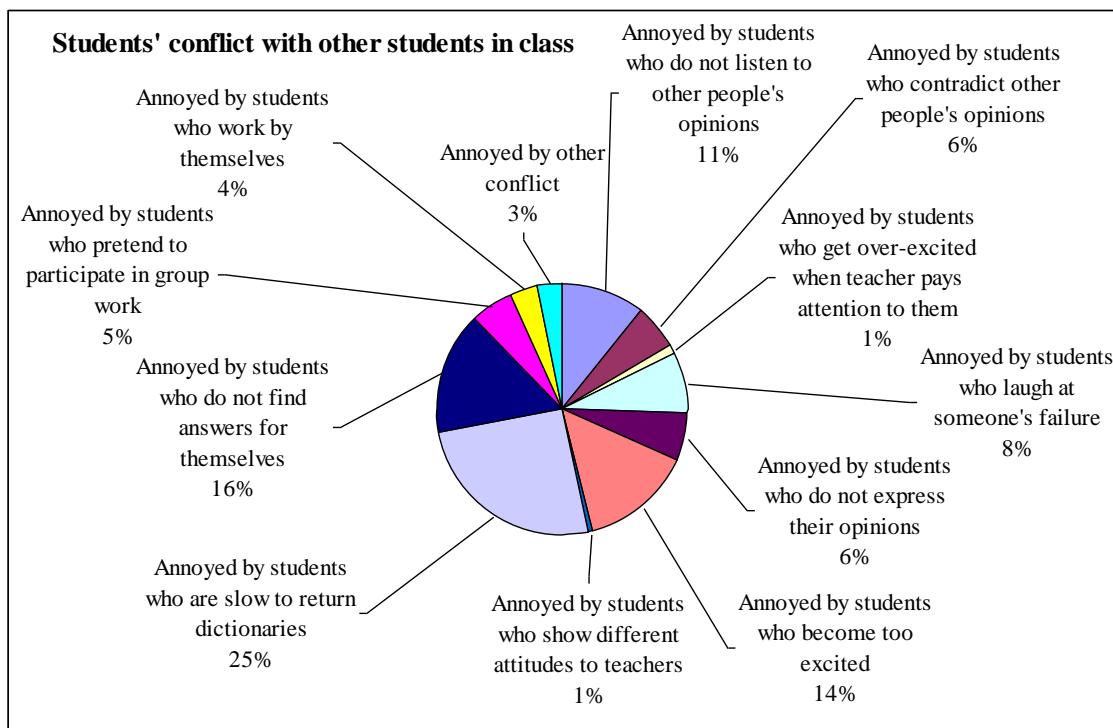
- 5) How do they perceive, and deal with interaction problems?
- 6) Are there any gender differences in the ways in which the students perceive and deal with classroom interaction?

5.3 The categories of conflict which students have with other students in class

The sense of conflict which, according to the students, affected their studying occurs in the proportions shown in Graph 5.2 below. The categories of conflict are covered by 12 of the questions in the student questionnaire. Question no. 5 runs “Below is a list of examples of conflict you may have had with your classmates whom you do not like or you do not get along with. There are 12 items in this list: 1) Classmates who do not listen to other people’s opinions (labelled “Listening”). 2) Classmates who contradict other people’s opinions (labelled “Contradiction”). 3) Classmates who get over-excited when the teacher pays attention to them (labelled “Excited”). 4) Classmates who laugh at someone else’s failure, for example, giving a wrong answer, being unable to answer (labelled “Laugh”). 5) Classmates who do not express their opinions (labelled “Opinions”). 6) Classmates who become too excited during class (labelled “Hyper-excited”). 7) Classmates who show different attitudes to a Japanese English teacher and a teacher who is a native speaker of English (labelled “Attitude”). 8) Classmates who are slow to return their dictionaries in class (labelled “Dictionary”). 9) Classmates who do not find answers for themselves, but depend on someone else to tell them (labelled “Answers”). 10) Classmates who only pretend to participate in group work (labelled “Participation”). 11) Classmates who work by themselves, not in pairs or groups (labelled “Work”). If students had other conflicts beyond the above, they are asked to identify their own conflict in item 12 (labelled “Other”).

Graph 5.2 shows students’ conflicts with other students in class.

Graph 5.2 Students' conflicts with other students in class



The students' answers show that they have most conflicts with others (i) who are slow to return their dictionaries in class and (ii) who do not find answers for themselves, but depend on someone else to tell them, (iii) who become too excited during class, and (iv) who do not listen to other people's opinions. What these three categories have in common is that they all hold up the learning process for the rest of the class. Students are able to perceive that this is the case and they find it annoying.

It is interesting to see whether male and female students have the same profile in terms of how tolerant they are of other students' behaviour. I therefore conducted a Mann-Whitney U Test to see if there were significant gender differences in the students' responses to Question 5, "Below is a list of examples of conflict you may have had with your classmates whom you do not like or you do not get along with. If you do not find your example listed, please describe

it in the final item" (see Appendix Four). Table 5.2 shows the results. In this table, '1' refers to female respondents and '2' refers to male respondents.

Table 5.2 Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test for responses to Question 5: Below is a list of examples of conflict you may have had with your classmates whom you do not like or you do not get along with.

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Listening	1	403	381.37	153690.5
	2	389	412.18	160337.5
	Total	792		
Contradiction	1	403	389.72	157059
	2	389	403.52	156969
	Total	792		
Excited	1	403	389.77	157076.5
	2	389	403.47	156951.5
	Total	792		
Laugh	1	403	392.36	158119.5
	2	389	400.79	155908.5
	Total	792		
Opinions	1	403	396.02	159597.5
	2	389	396.99	154430.5
	Total	792		
Hyper excited	1	403	395.68	159458.5
	2	389	397.35	154569.5
	Total	792		
Attitude	1	403	377.29	152049.5
	2	389	416.4	161978.5
	Total	792		
Dictionary	1	403	404.01	162817
	2	389	388.72	151211
	Total	792		
Participation	1	403	407.5	164220.5
	2	389	385.11	149807.5
	Total	792		
Work	1	403	388.29	156482.5
	2	389	405	157545.5
	Total	792		
Response	1	403	405.62	163466.5
	2	389	387.05	150561.5
	Total	792		

	Listening	Contradiction	Excited	Laugh	Opinions	Hyper excited	Attitude	Dictionary	Participation	Work	Response
Mann-Whitney U	72284.5	75653	75671	76714	78191.5	78052.5	70643.5	75356	73952.5	75077	74706.5
Wilcoxon W	153691	157059	2E+05	2E+05	159598	159458.5	152050	151211	149807.5	156483	150561.5
Z	-2.04	-0.895	-0.88	-0.54	-0.062	-0.107	-2.505	-0.983	-1.448	-1.07	-1.185
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.041	0.371	0.379	0.59	0.95	0.914	0.012	0.326	0.148	0.285	0.236

We can see from this table that there were only significant differences for two of the items: item 5-1, “Classmates who do not listen to other people’s opinions” and item 5-7, “Classmates who show different attitudes to a Japanese English teacher and a teacher who is a native speaker of English”. Male students were significantly more likely than female ones to state that they found these behaviours annoying. Thus compared with female students, male students seem to be particularly critical of people who show a lack of respect to other students or to the teacher.

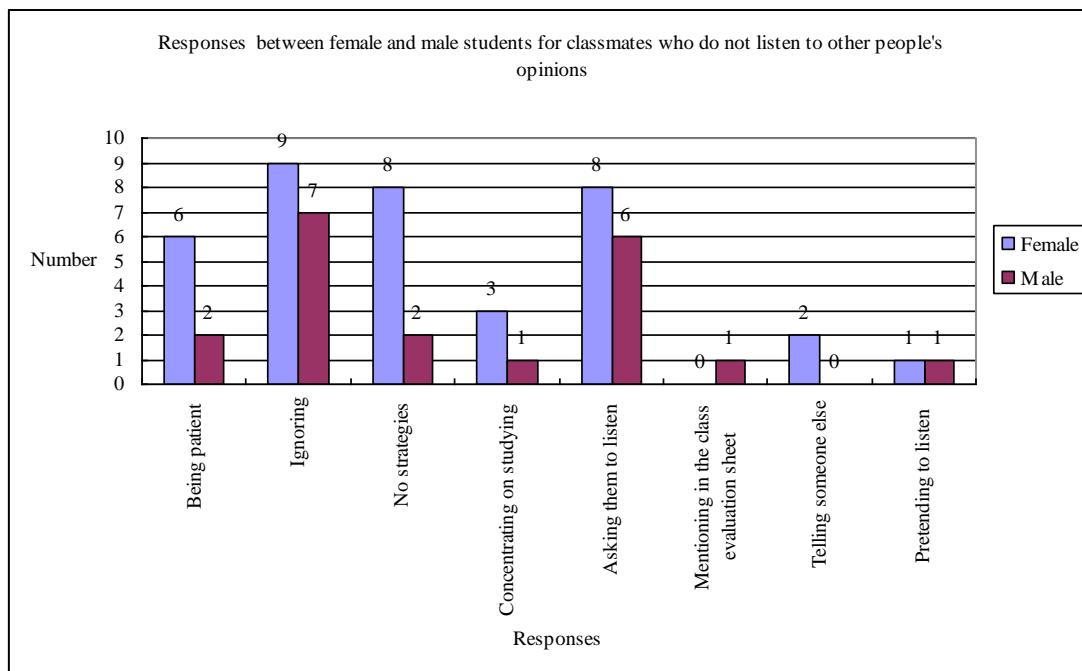
5. 4 Students’ strategies for coping with their own examples of conflict

In order to answer Research Questions 5 and 6, both of which refer to the students’ strategies for dealing with conflict, students were asked, in question 5-2, to identify from the list one or two examples of conflict which they have had with their classmates and to list their strategies for coping with these conflicts. In this section, I present their answers and analyse them by gender. Because of the small number of respondents for each item, the gender differences were not analysed for statistical significance in this part of the study. However the findings made here do point to several potentially interesting areas for further study. These are indicated below.

Let us first look at the coping strategies used by the students to deal with item 1: “Classmates who do not listen to other people’s opinions”. Of the 57 students who chose this area of

conflict, 10 did not have any strategies to cope with it, because it brings to a halt the shared activities in group work or pair work. The graph shows that there are gender differences in terms of the ways in which students of different genders cope with other students who do not listen to other people's opinions.

Graph 5.3 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 1: 'classmates who do not listen to other people's opinions'

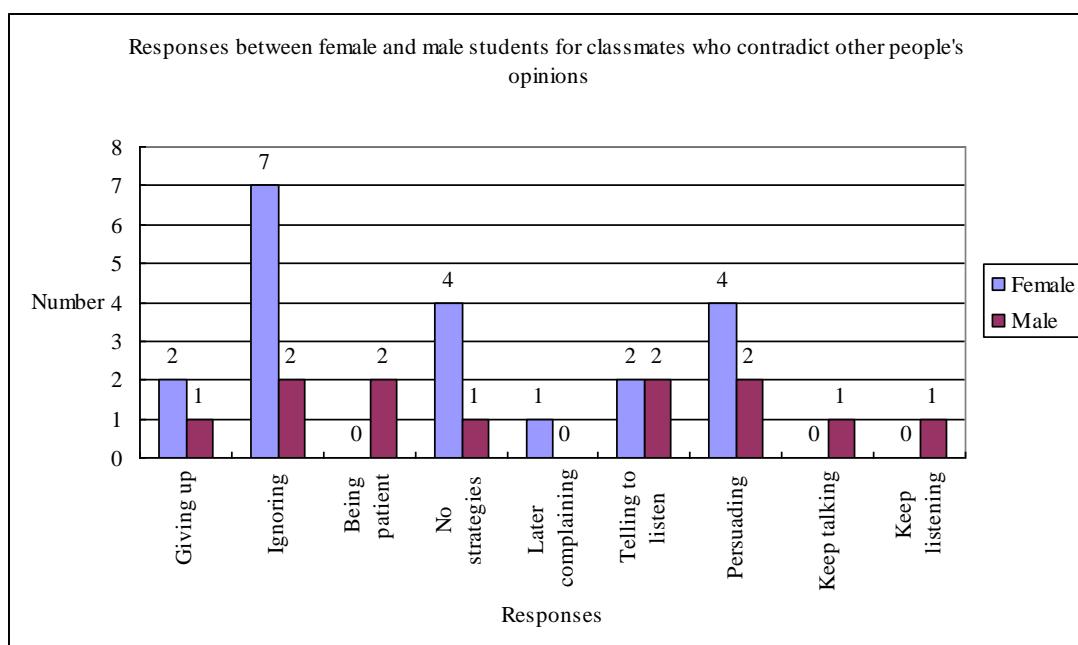


According to the above graph, female students tend to ignore these students, but more female students than male ones bravely ask these students to listen to others' opinions. They are also more patient with these students than male students are. However, 8 female students had no strategies to solve this problem. This may lead them to be patient with the students who do not listen to other's opinions. Male students tend to try and ignore the problem and try to concentrate on their own work.

32 students chose to answer item 2: 'classmates who contradict other people's opinions' and

as we can see in Graph 5.4, there were some interesting apparent gender differences for this item:

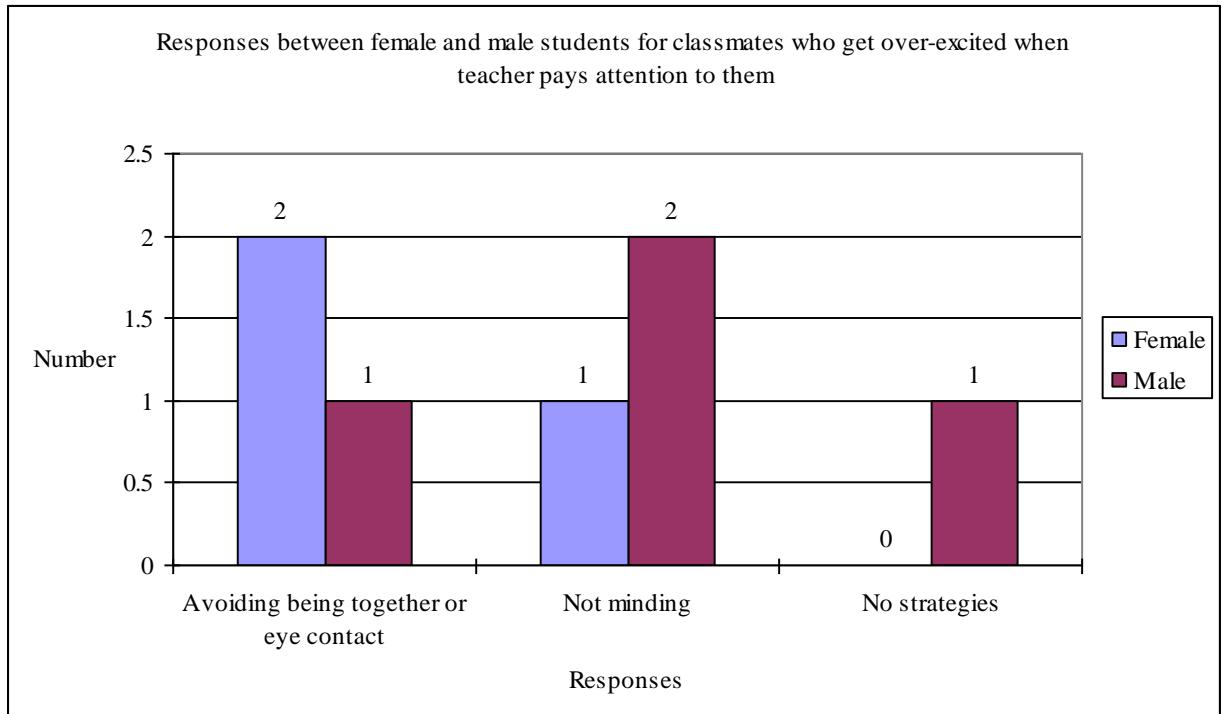
Graph 5.4 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 2, ‘classmates who contradict other people’s opinions.’



Graph 5.4 shows that female students tend to ignore classmates who contradict other people’s opinions; they need to find a strategy to cope with such people. The degree of tolerance for such students will show the general level of acceptance of different opinions. In class, it appears that students, especially female students, must learn to appreciate different opinions instead of flatly contradicting them; they will progress only through learning to use reason to change people’s views.

Only 7 students chose to answer item 3: ‘classmates who get over-excited when the teacher pays attention to them’ and again there were some interesting gender differences (though which such small numbers it was impossible to test for statistical significance).

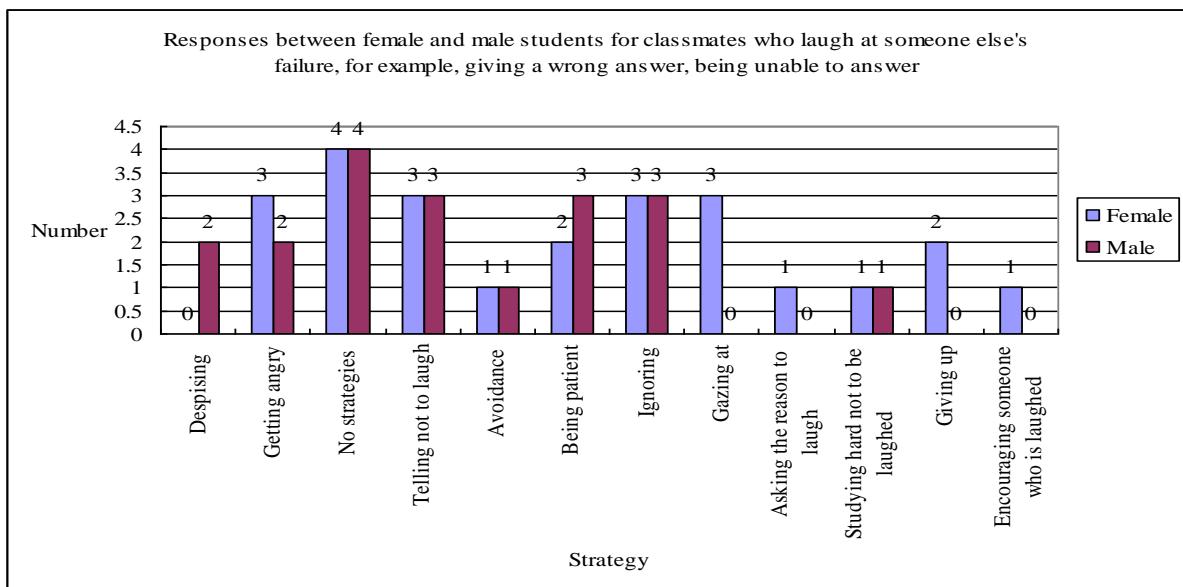
Graph 5.5 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 3, ‘classmates who get over-excited when the teacher pays attention to them’



The students in general do not appear to have particularly constructive strategies for dealing with this problem.

8 students chose item 4: ‘classmates who laugh at someone else’s failure, for example, giving a wrong answer, being unable to answer’ and they display a range of strategies for dealing with this problem.

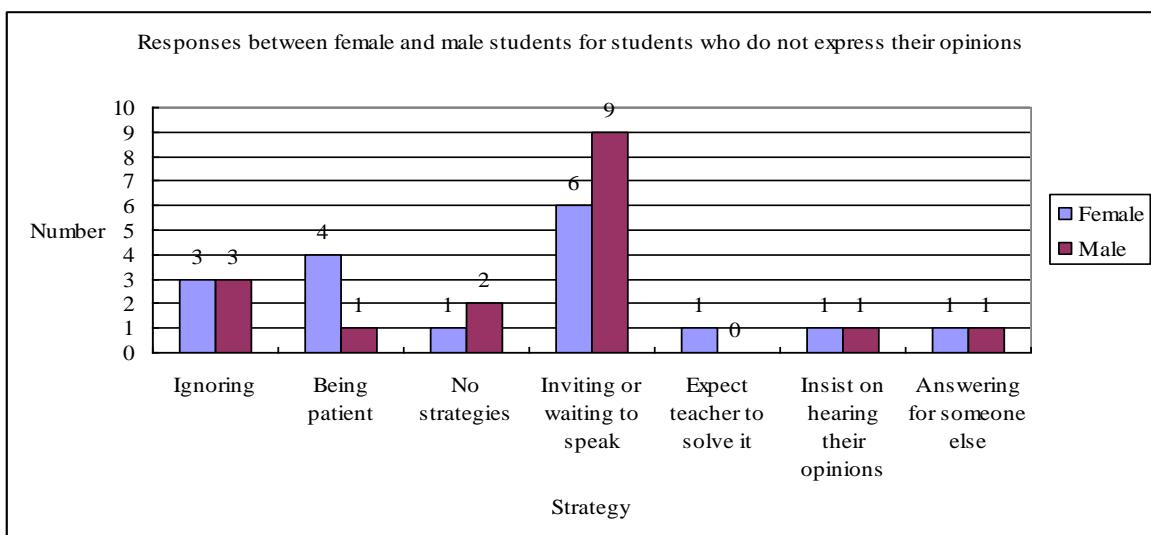
Graph 5.6 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 4, ‘classmates who laugh at someone else’s failure, for example, giving a wrong answer, being unable to answer’



The results show that, to cope with this conflict, some negative responses have arisen, such as showing contempt, getting angry, ignoring such students and staring at them. It is interesting to note that male students tend to despise these students while female students merely stare at them. Gender differences appear to affect the way in which female and male students react towards classmates who laugh at someone else’s failure but more research is needed to assess whether this is a significant difference. In Graph 5.6, classmates who laugh at someone’s failure annoyed the respondents because they seem to be looking down on the unfortunate. This is potentially a more serious issue because students fear that the company of such people in class will hinder learning. Some students do not like to study together with those whom they think are less gifted; they may not know how to treat these students in the classroom.

34 students chose to answer item 5: ‘classmates who do not express their opinions’ and the gender differences in their ways of dealing with this problem are shown in Graph 5.7.

Gender differences in the ways students dealt with item 5: ‘classmates who do not express their opinions’

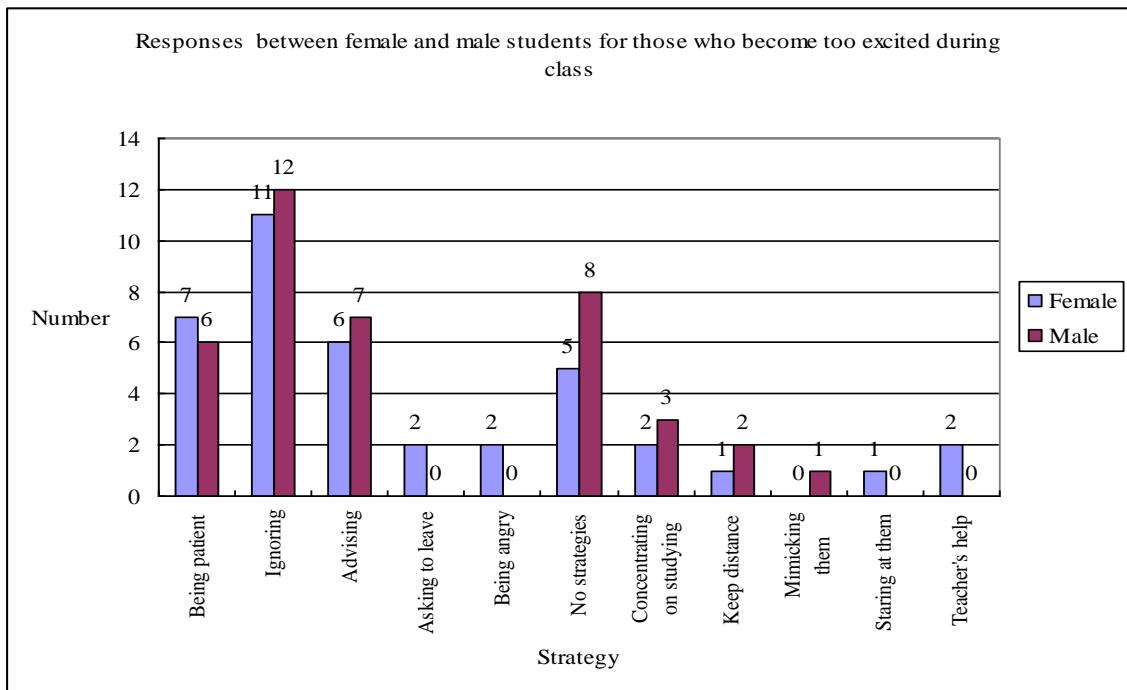


Both female and male students, it appears, wait patiently for or invite these students to express their opinions. These are good strategies because they encourage silent students in pair or group work, who would otherwise inhibit discussion and leave the task unfinished. These results indicate that the students seem to have adequate strategies for dealing with silent students in class. The graph shows that more male students than female try to wait for or invite the silent students to express their opinions, though male students tend to be less patient than female students. At this point, the word, “being patient” may indicate a different meaning, such as “giving up”, in the case of female respondents.

However, some students do not wait for quiet students to speak because they resent the waste of time when the teacher has to call out one student’s name after another until s/he finds someone who is prepared to answer. Therefore, inviting a reply or waiting for someone to speak seems to be a good strategy. At the same time, the reason for students’ not expressing an opinion should be investigated.

78 students chose to answer item 6: ‘classmates who become too excited during class’ and the gender differences in their ways of dealing with this problem are shown in Graph 5.8. They had a conflict with students who “become too excited”. Students who become too excited during class stop the work of the class or the lecture unnecessarily because the teacher or the fellow-students must persuade them to calm down. Until they do, the progress of lectures or learning is held up. These students are often found in English conversation classes, where other students cannot converse because of the disruptive behaviour of a few.

Graph 5.8 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 6, ‘classmates who become too excited during class’



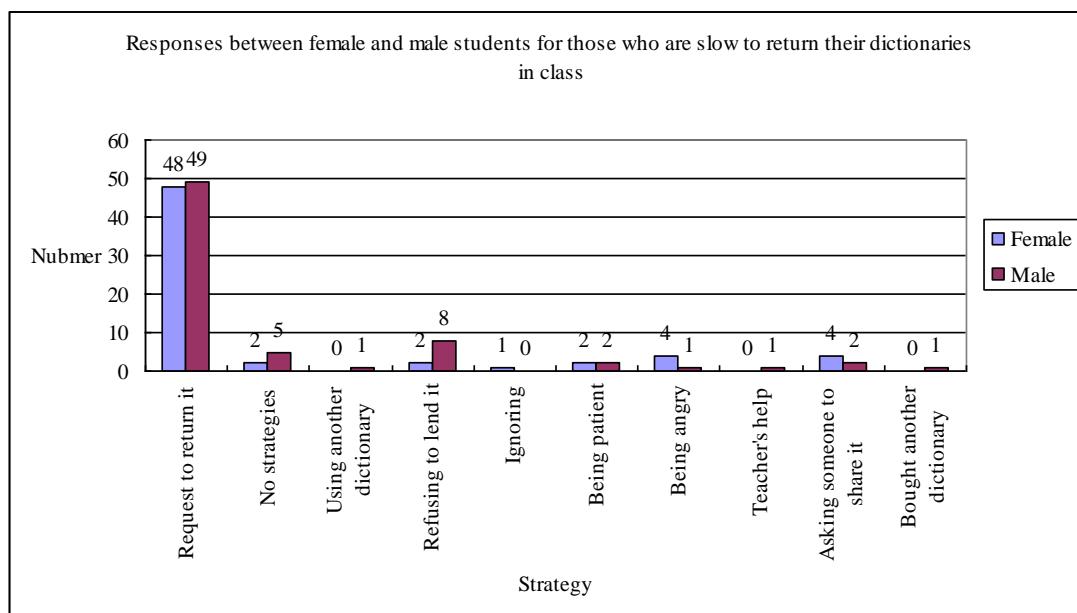
According to this graph, male students have slightly fewer strategies for dealing with this problem than female, and female students tend to get angry, ask such students to leave or stare at them. Both male and female students often opted to ignore the problem. But this is

perhaps not the best approach and it could be useful if, from time to time, students helped the teacher to monitor other students' behaviour.

Only 4 students chose the ways that students deal with item 7: 'classmates who have different attitudes to a Japanese English teacher and a teacher who is a native speaker of English.' It seems to be rare to have classmates who show such discriminatory attitudes. One reason for this could be that the students who answered this question have probably been taught to their present level by Japanese English teachers only. If more of them had learned English under both Japanese English teachers and native English teachers, a different result might have emerged.

133 students chose the ways that students deal with item 8: 'classmates who are slow to return their dictionaries in class.' This probably indicates how dependent students are on dictionaries during class. There are always some students who depend on someone else to lend them a dictionary. Graph 5.9 shows the gender differences in this regard.

Graph 5.9 Gender differences in the ways students deal with item 8: ‘classmates who are slow to return their dictionaries in class.’

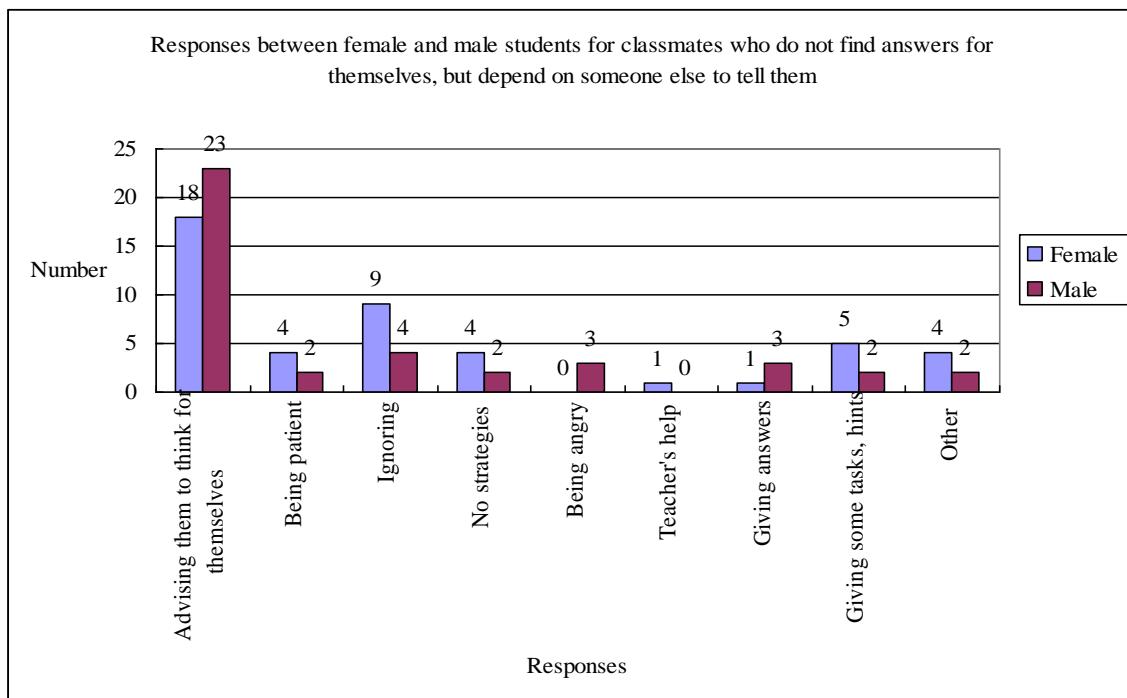


This graph shows that many students use dictionaries in class and they cannot always get their dictionaries back from those who have borrowed them, and that other students perceive this as a problem. However, students do have certain strategies to get their dictionaries back, such as requesting their return. This is the biggest area of conflict for students in the classroom according to Graph 5.9. A few male students who have no strategy to cope with the loss of their dictionaries refuse to lend them to other students. Using dictionaries in class makes us wonder what teaching methods the teachers are using.

87 students chose to answer item 9: ‘classmates who do not find answers for themselves, but depend on someone else to tell them.’ Getting answers from someone else is a frequent technique of avoidance for Japanese students when they want to avoid difficulties and this attitude shows an unwillingness to learn or lack of seriousness in learning, at least in the classroom. If the teacher allows this attitude in the classroom, more students may depend on

others who study hard and consequently may not study for themselves. Therefore, learning in such classrooms may not often take place effectively.

Graph 5.10 Gender differences in answering item 9: ‘classmates who do not find answers for themselves, but depend on someone else to tell them.’

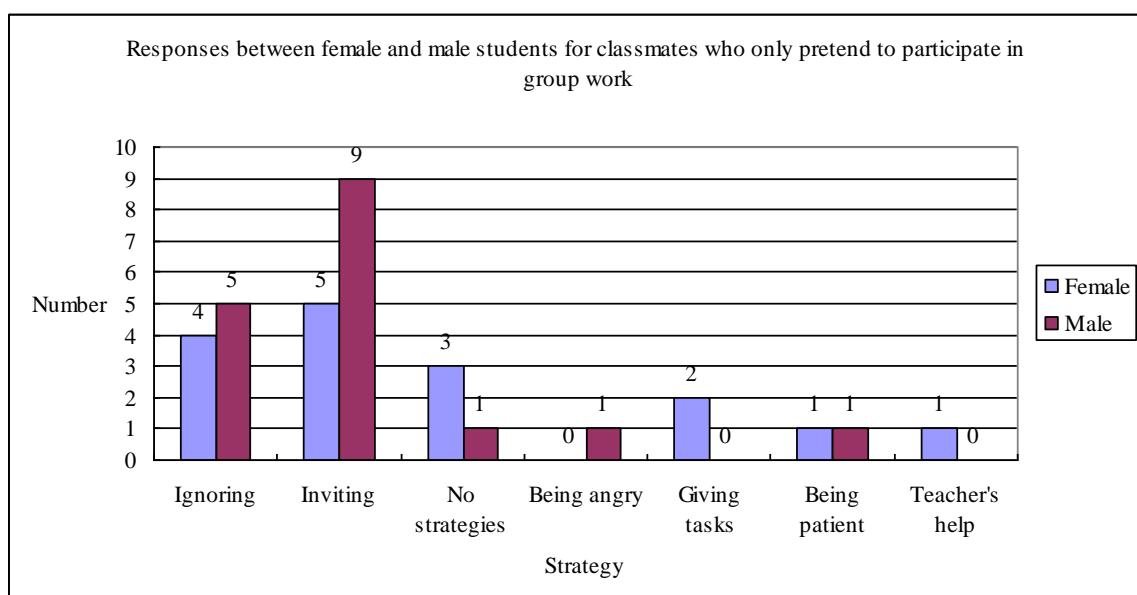


Both female and male students, however, try to support classmates who do not find answers to questions for themselves. Female students tend to make an effort to help the students who depend for their answers on someone else, by supplying answers if asked, giving them tasks to help them or being patient, but some students ignore such classmates or give them only the answers that they want. Male students are less patient than female students; some of the male students say that they ignore or get angry with such dependent students.

33 students chose the ways that students deal with item 10: ‘classmates who only pretend to participate in group work’. Most students try to cope with classmates who pretend to

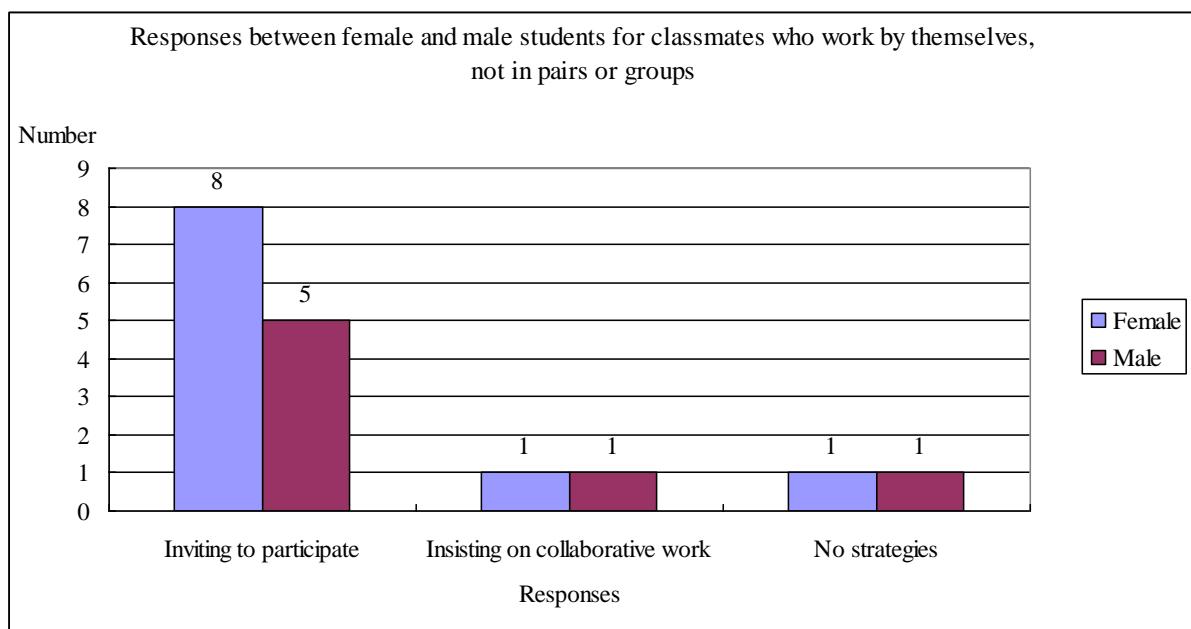
participate in group work by inviting them to join in the work. More male students than female students want to invite classmates to join in when they are only pretending to participate in group work; female students tend to ignore non-participating students, and this suggests that female students ought to prepare some strategies to deal with them.

Graph 5.11 Gender differences the ways that students deal with item 10: ‘classmates who only pretend to participate in group work’.



17 students chose the ways that students deal with item 10 ‘classmates who only pretend to participate in group work’. More male students try to invite such classmates to play their part in the group work. Female students should find better strategies to deal with these students, because ignoring them or having no strategies to deal with them does not resolve this conflict.

Graph 5.12 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 11 ‘classmates work by themselves, not in pairs or groups’



Female students try to invite classmates who work by themselves to work collaboratively in pairs or groups. That there are such classmates suggests that there are reasons for not working in pairs or groups. It may be that their own study preferences are being ignored in class. This might suggest that, at a higher level of education, teachers tend to lecture all the time, not giving students the chance to put forward their opinions and thoughts in the classroom, but merely asking them to listen.

29 students chose the ways that students deal with item 12 ‘Other conflicts’. 7 students were annoyed by students who chatted during class, 4 students had conflicts with students who had no motivation, and 3 students had negative feelings towards students who were too proud of themselves in class. They did not indicate what strategies they had to cope with these conflicts.

5.5 Summary of the types of conflict that the students had with each other, and their ways of dealing with them

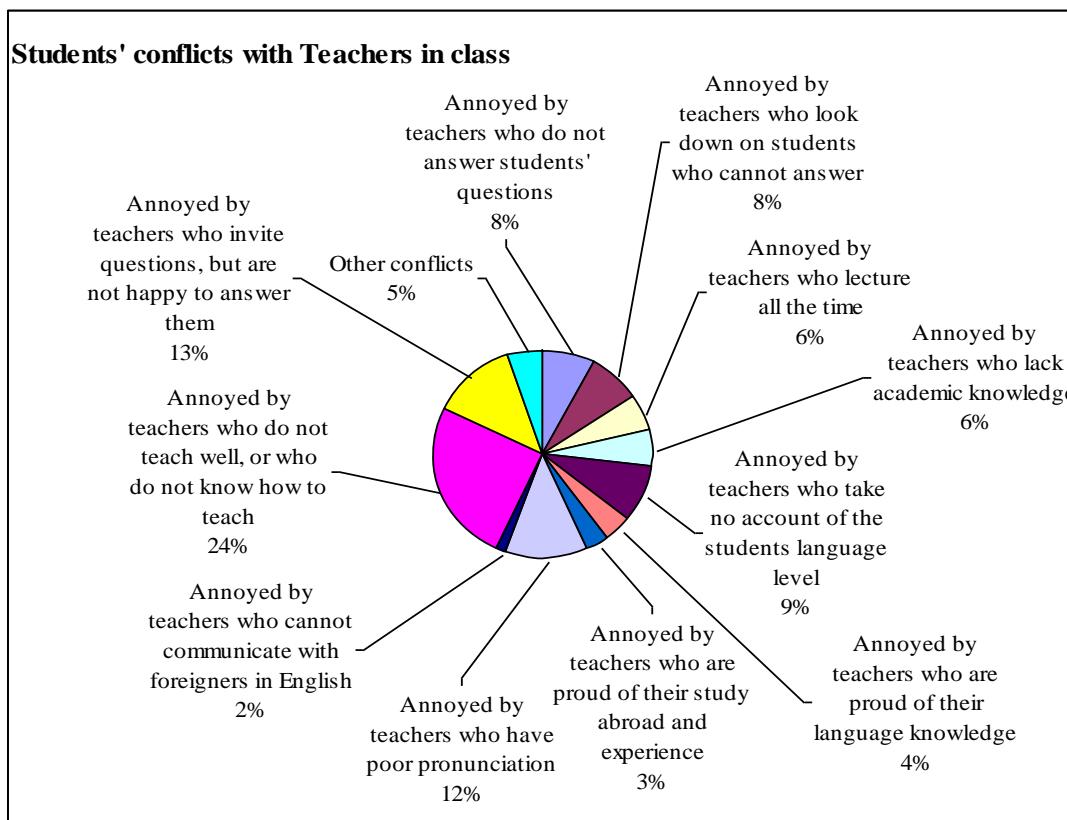
Common responses, such as “Being patient”, “Ignoring” and “Having no strategies” are found throughout the analysis. However, these strategies are negative strategies for dealing with conflicts in the classroom. Female students in particular use the strategy of gazing at others, a non-verbal reaction. Some students seem not to know how to cope with classmates who affect their learning adversely in the classroom.

The above evidence shows that there are some serious conflicts within Japanese EFL classes, and that students have different techniques for dealing with these conflicts. In their reactions to conflict appear some especially common options, such as “being patient”, “ignoring” and “having no strategies”, but they still claim that students who want to concentrate on learning should find strategies to deal with conflicts in the classroom which hinder the progress of the learning. The findings indicate that there may be gender differences in this area, particularly with respect to whether or not they are likely to respond orally to the conflict, and these would be worthy of further investigation.

5.6 The types of conflict that the students had with the teacher, and their ways of dealing with them

The conflicts with their teacher which students claimed to have affected their studying occur in the proportions shown in Graph 5.13. This shows students’ conflicts with teachers in class.

Graph 5.13 Students' conflicts with teachers in class



The fact that students are most annoyed by teachers who do not teach them well indicates that they have a strong set of priorities and that they know what is most important for them.

5.7 The categories of conflict which students have with teachers in class

Students have the following causes of conflict with teachers in the classroom (Q6-2-10), they are annoyed by “Teachers who do not teach well or not know how to teach” (labelled “Teaching”), Q 6-2-11, “Teachers who invite questions, but are not happy to answer them” (labelled “Unwilling”), Q6-2-8, “Teachers who have poor pronunciation” (labelled “Pronunciation”), Q 6-2-5, “Teachers who take no account of the students’ language level” (labelled “Accounting”), Q 6-2-1, “Teachers who do not answer students’ questions” (labelled “Response”), and Q 6-2-2, “Teachers who look down on students who cannot answer” (named

“Despise”). Q-6-2-3, “Teachers who lecture all the time” (labelled “Lecture”), Q 6-2-4, “Teachers who lack academic knowledge” (labelled “Knowledge”), Q 6-2-6, “Teachers who are proud of their language proficiency” (labelled “Proficiency”), Q 6-2-7, “Teachers who are proud of their study abroad and experience” (labelled “Experience”), and Q 6-2-9, “Teachers who cannot communicate with foreigners in English” (labelled “Communication”). Graph 5.13 indicates students’ conflicts at a significant level with teachers in responses to items 6-1, 6-2, 6-5, 6-8, 6-10 and 6-11.

Again, it is interesting to see whether there were any significant differences between male and female students in terms of their answers to this question. Therefore a Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted for gender effects. The results are as follows:

Table 5.3 Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test for responses to Question 6: There follows a list of examples of what you may feel are causes of the frustration or bad feeling which you have had with your English teachers.

Despise	1		403	403.74	162708.5
	2	389	389	151319.5	
	Total	792			
Lecture	1	403	382.86	154292	
	2	389	410.63	159736	
	Total	792			
Knowledge	1	403	396.25	159687	
	2	389	396.76	154341	
	Total	792			
Accounting	1	403	402.86	162354.5	
	2	389	389.91	151673.5	
	Total	792			
Proficiency	1	403	396.95	159971.5	
	2	389	396.03	154056.5	
	Total	792			
Experience	1	403	394.55	159003	
	2	389	398.52	155025	
	Total	792			
Pronunciation	1	403	398.93	160767.5	
	2	389	393.99	153260.5	
	Total	792			
Communication	1	403	410.15	165291	
	2	389	382.36	148737	
	Total	792			
Teaching	1	403	401.34	161741	
	2	389	391.48	152287	
	Total	792			
Unwilling	1	403	408.96	164809	
	2	389	383.6	149219	
	Total	792			

	Despise	Lecture	Knowledge	Accounting	Proficiency	Experience	Pronunciation	Communication	Teaching	Unwilling
Mann-Whitney U	75464.5	72886	78281	75818.5	78201.5	77597	77405.5	72882	76432	73364
Wilcoxon W Z	151319.5	154292	159687	151673.5	154056.5	159003	153260.5	148737	152287	149219
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	-0.937	-1.772	-0.033	-0.827	-0.058	-0.253	-0.316	-1.773	-0.629	-1.614

These results show that there were no significant gender differences in terms of the ways the students perceived conflicts with the teacher.

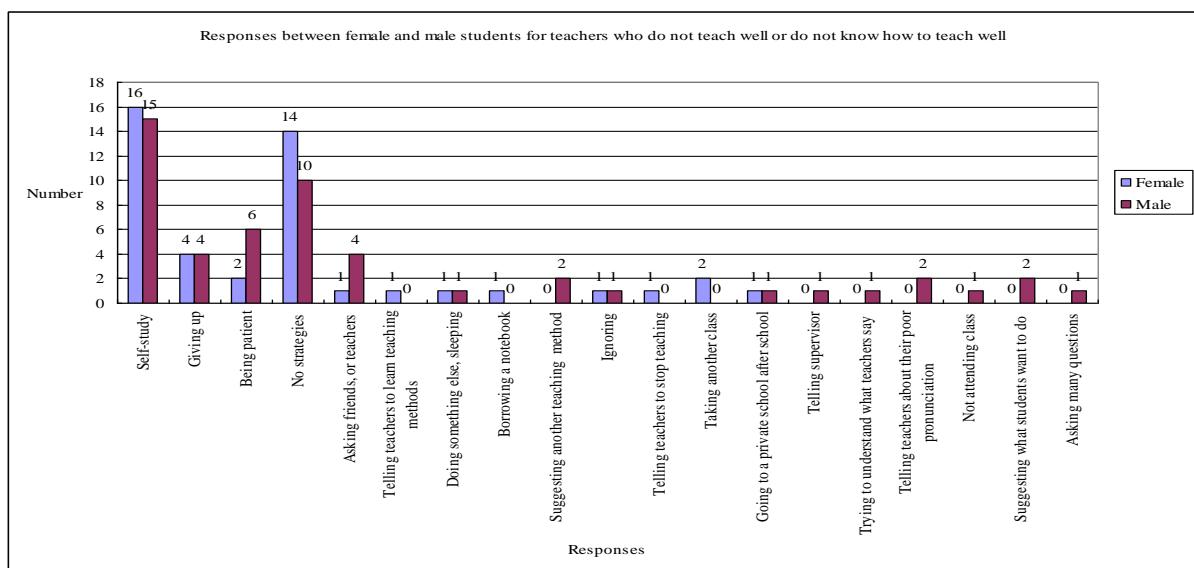
In the following section, we look at the strategies which the students used to cope with these conflicts.

5.7.1 Strategies which students used to cope with conflict with teachers

In Question 6-2, students were asked to identify from the list in Question 6 one or two examples of conflict which they had had with a teacher and their strategies for coping with conflict in the classroom. Each graph shows what strategies students use to a significant extent in dealing with actual conflicts.

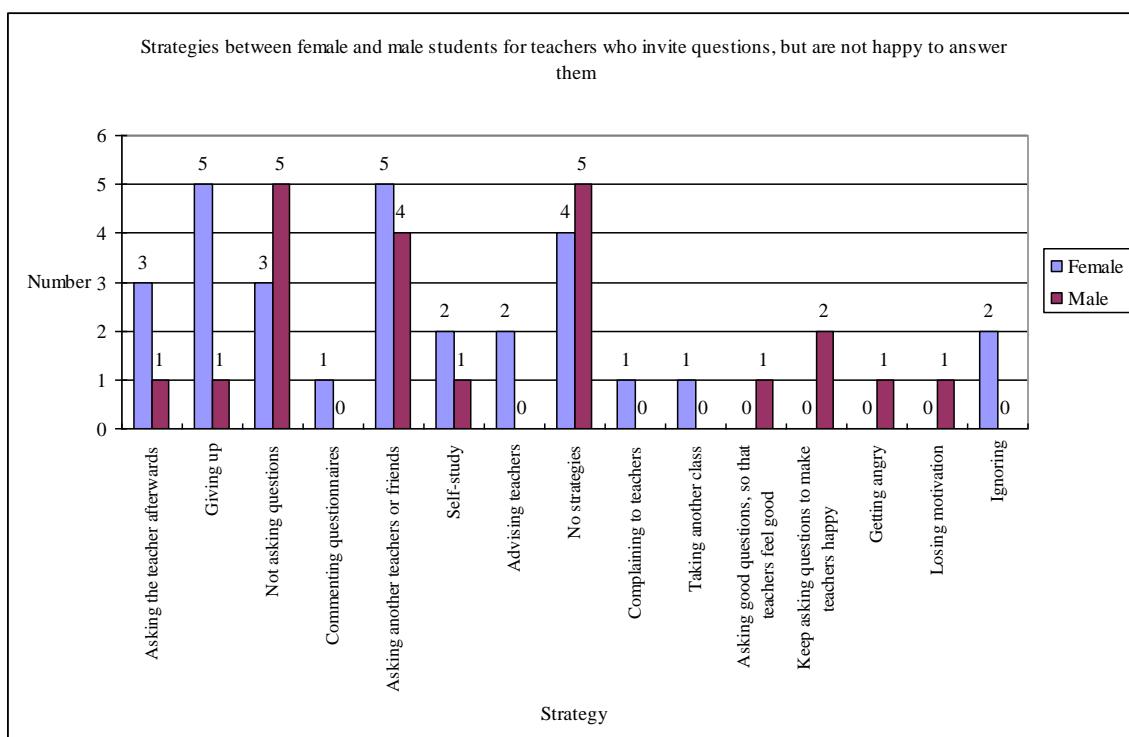
97 students chose the ways that students deal with item 10: ‘Teachers who do not teach well or do not know how to teach well’ and graph 5.14 shows the different ways in which they dealt with this potential area of conflict.

Graph 5.14 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 10: ‘Teachers who do not teach well or do not know how to teach well’



The above graph shows that students study by themselves as a way of dealing with this conflict but that some students, both female and male, have no strategies for doing so. Students in this situation will get bored in class and will remain only for the sake of earning credits, but will not be learning there. Instead, they take a nap or use their mobile phones or talk with their neighbours. As we will see in Section 5.8.1 below, this finding echoes the response given by the teachers.

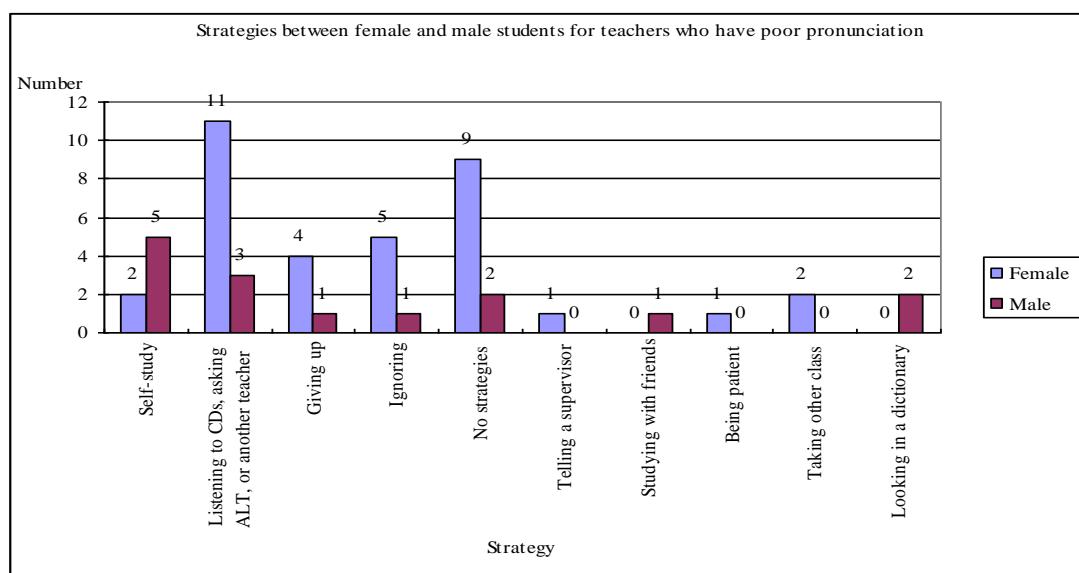
Graph 5.15 Gender differences in the ways students deal with item 11, ‘Teachers who invite questions, but are not happy to answer them’



Responses from female students show that when they doubt if their teacher has enough knowledge, they put their questions to other teachers or friends and consequently often turn to talk with their neighbours. Male students stop asking questions altogether. Both female and male students, then, should find acceptable strategies to deal with this conflict. This

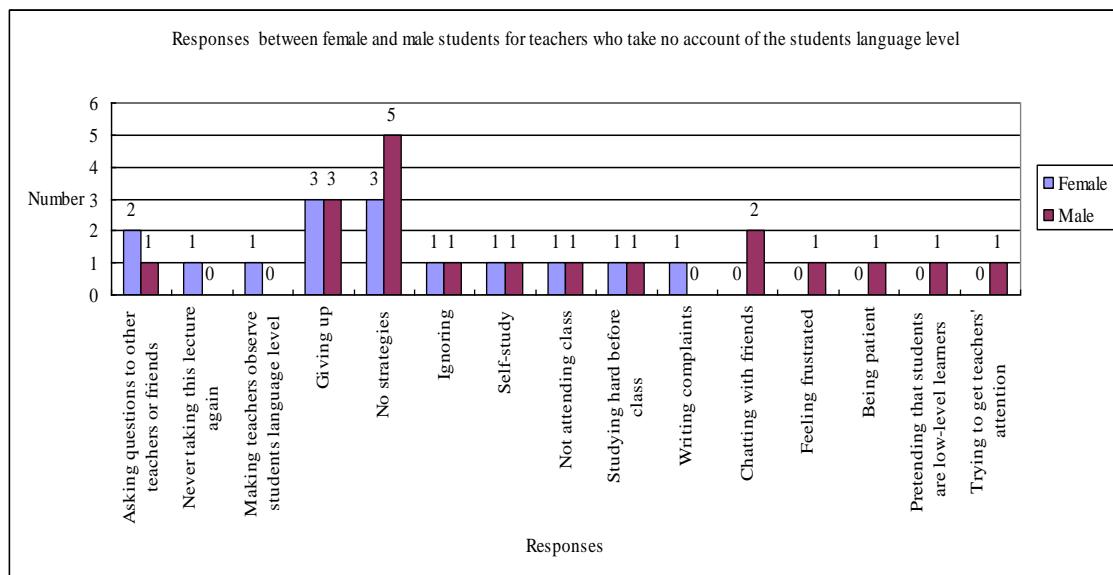
influences learning in the classroom and again corroborates findings to be discussed below which present the views of the teachers on the subject of “Students who talk often with their neighbours while the teacher lectures”.

Graph 5.16 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 8: ‘Teachers who have poor pronunciation’



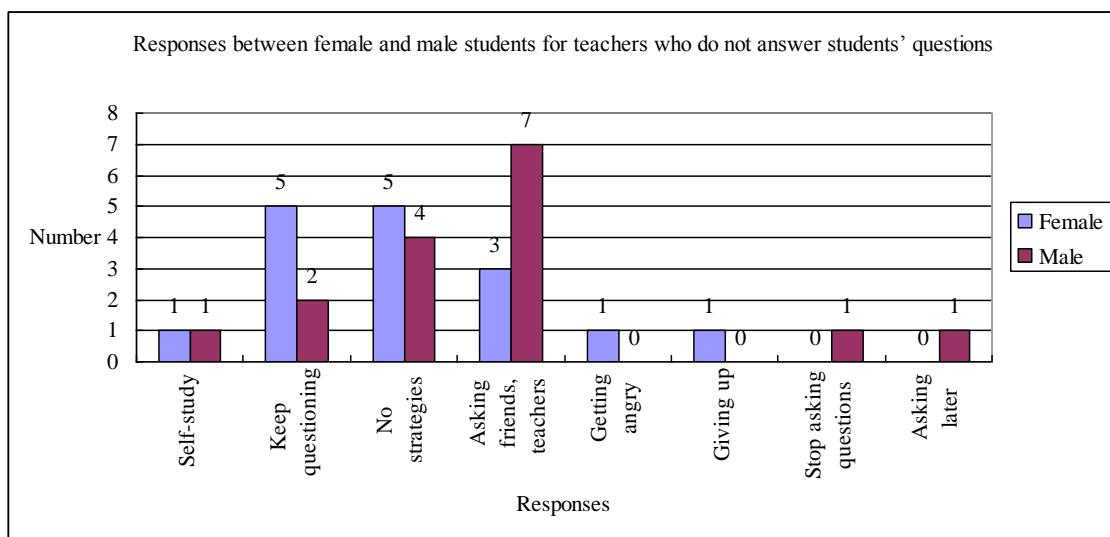
According to Graph 5.16, Japanese students are keen to learn good pronunciation and they tend to despise teachers who have poor pronunciation, using such strategies as “studying for themselves”, “listening to CDs, asking ALT (Assistant Language Teachers), or other teachers”, “giving up” and “ignoring”. There is a problem for the 9 female students who have no strategies to deal with this conflict, because when they meet English speakers, they will not be able to communicate, since their listening and speaking abilities have not progressed in the classroom. For future communication, this is serious, since most oral learning in Japan is confined to classrooms. It relates to item 3 in Question 9-1 in the questionnaire for teachers, which concerns “Students who are not willing even to try and communicate in English”.

Graph 5.17 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 5: ‘teachers who take no account of the students’ language level’



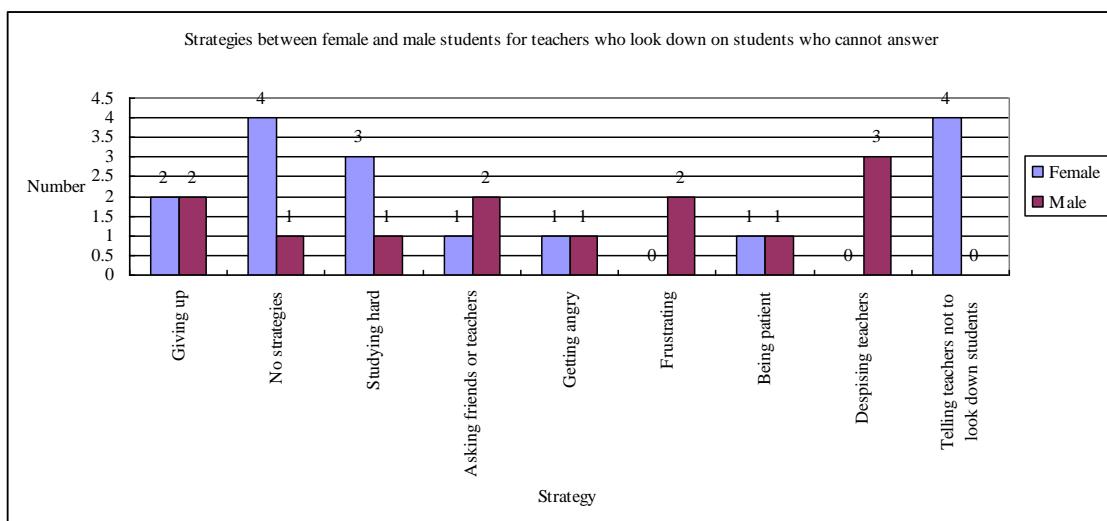
Male students have more strategies to deal with this conflict than do female students. As the above graph shows, students will give up making the effort to learn from such teachers and will lose the motivation to study. Students’ strategies to cope with this conflict are “giving up”, “having no strategies”, “chatting with friends”, “ignoring” and “not attending this class”. These strategies are, however, negative and do not promote learning English in the classroom. This relates to item 2 in Question 9-1 in the questionnaire for teachers, “Students who do not pay attention during class”.

Graph 5.18 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 1 ‘teachers who do not answer students’ questions’



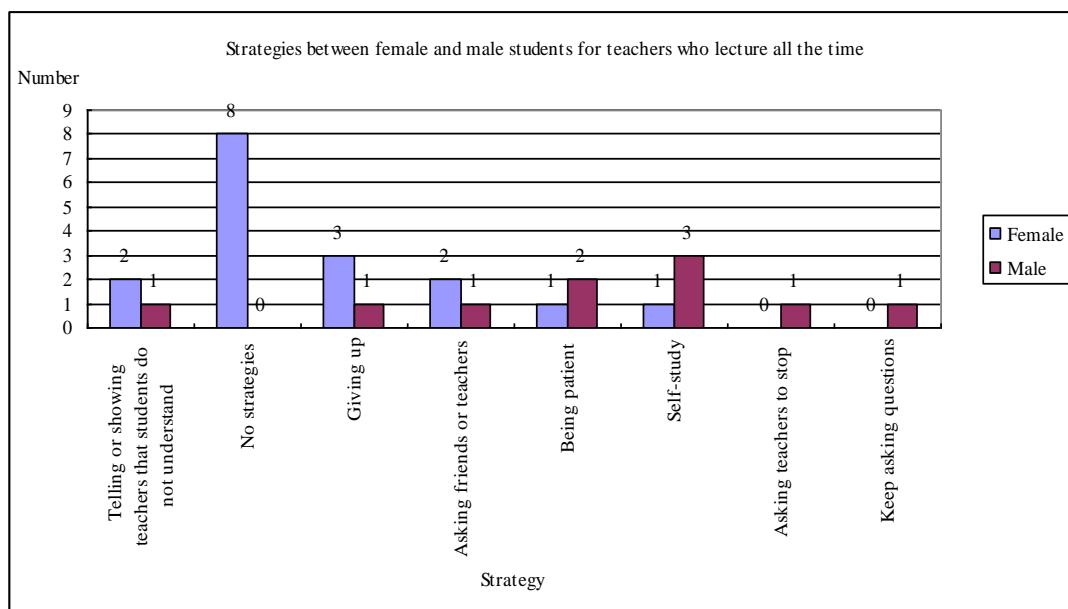
According to Graph 5.18, male students tend to ask their friends or teachers for answers, but female students tend to continue to ask questions until they get answers from teachers. However, amongst both male and female students, there are some who have no strategies to deal with this conflict. Moreover, attitudes of this sort from the teacher hurt students' feelings and in the end discourage them from asking questions. In fact, one male student said that he had already stopped asking questions. Female students appeal to teachers to answer their questions by continuing to ask them. This attitude tells us a good deal about Japanese classrooms and shows how students tend to believe in the fallacy that teachers must know everything and they must supply students with answers. This is why students, in particular female students, tend to wait for answers from their teachers instead of finding answers for themselves. It might be useful for educators in Japan to look for ways of reducing the levels of dependence which students often have on their teacher to encourage them to increasingly think or find answers for themselves, otherwise, they will never become creative or independent students.

Graph 5.19 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 2: ‘teachers who look down on students who cannot answer’



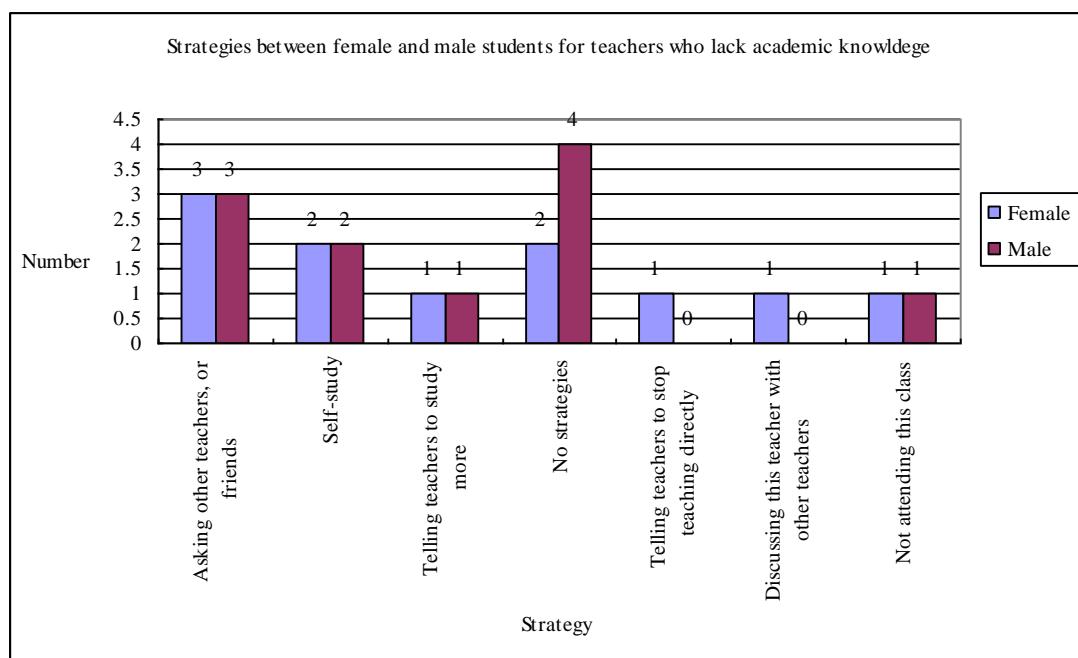
Graph 5.19 shows that male students are frustrated with and despise teachers who look down on students who cannot answer. Male students have a covert way of dealing with this conflict, but female students have an explicit strategy for teachers of this type. Some female students verbally challenge such teachers. Other female students have a different strategy for dealing with this conflict: studying hard. The remaining female students have no strategy or give as their way of dealing with it the likelihood that they would stop attending classes. This example relates to items 9 ('Classmates, who do not find answers for themselves, but depend on someone else to tell them') and 10 ('Classmates who only pretend to participate in group work') in the students' Question 5.

Graph 5.20 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 3: ‘Teachers who lecture all the time’



8 female students have no strategies or do not try to deal with this conflict. Without a strategy, students talk with their classmates during lectures, use their mobile phones and send emails. In class, if students study by themselves due to being too bored with listening, they tend to lose the motivation to learn. This question relates to item 10 in Question 5 for the students, “Classmates who only pretend to participate in group work”. In the classroom, if teachers lecture all the time, there is no interaction between them and students, though interaction has a vital role in learning, most of all in language learning.

Graph 5.21 Gender differences in the ways that students deal with item 4: ‘Teachers who lack academic knowledge’



Some good students want to learn more, or to ask questions. If the students do not get adequate answers from the teacher, they think that the teacher does not know very much and this makes them look down on him/her. These attitudes are represented in the graph as ‘Asking other teachers or friends’ or ‘Studying by themselves’. 4 male students said that they had no strategies to deal with this conflict. However, such students begin to stay away from class; but they do not necessarily think of or find out for themselves the answers that they need. This response to this example recalls item 1 in the students’ Question 6, “Teachers who do not answer students’ questions”.

5.7.2 Summary of the types of strategy which students used to deal with potential conflicts with teachers

Among the responses from students having conflicts with teachers in the classroom, there are

some common features. Though students must have had strategies to deal with conflicts, they responded negatively, claiming to “have no strategies”, to “study by themselves in the classroom”, to “ignore teachers”, “give up”, and “ask other teachers or friends”, and to “be patient”. These are not good ways of improving learning in the classroom. Students need to find active strategies to cope with these annoyances while continuing to learn.

Having looked at the issue of conflict from the student’s point of view, I now turn to the teachers, and look at what they make of these problems. In the teachers’ questionnaire I asked them about the types of conflict they had experienced in their classes and about the ways in which they dealt with this conflict. It is interesting to see that many of the answers in the sections below mirror the responses given by the students, enabling us to get a more rounded picture of the situation in Japanese university EFL classrooms.

5.8 Overall information about the teachers in the study

Two hundred and seventy-five questionnaires were sent to English teachers in Japan from August 25 to December 7, 2005. The teachers were chosen at random from the list issued by JACET (The Japan Association of College English Teachers) issued in 2004. In the world of Japanese universities, there are more male than female teachers. Eighty-three teachers (30.18%) returned the questionnaires, thirty-three female (44.6%) and forty-six male (55.4%). The degrees which they hold are shown in Table 1.

Table 5.4 Degrees held by teachers in the study

	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
Female	2	27	8
Male	8	28	10

More male teachers than female teachers in this study have degrees at bachelor or doctorate level, but master's degree are held by the majority of the group as a whole. The more teachers learn, the more specialized they become and this may help them to explain or answer students' questions better. However, they may not be experts in language teaching methodology, because training is not offered in such areas as university level teaching methods, skills and classroom management. Universities have the right to choose their own staff and they usually choose them on the basis of their higher specialist degree and their publication record. No formal teaching qualifications are required to teach at a Japanese university.

There are five nationalities among the teachers who replied to the questionnaires: sixty-six Japanese English teachers (79.5%), nine Americans (10.8%), two British (2.4%), five Canadians (6%) and 1 other (1.2%).

Table 5.5 shows how many complete academic years the teachers in this study have taught English in Japan.

Table 5.5 Complete academic years of experience as university teachers, showing gender differences

Complete academic year	2-10 years	11-15 years	Over 16 years
Female	9	6	22
Male	6	10	30

More male English teachers than female have taught English in Japan for 16 years. A long period spent teaching can give teachers the experience to understand their students better and learn how to manage or teach them. This question recalls the questions on the length of teaching experience and degree of tolerance.

24 female teachers and 21 male teachers had lived in America before they became English teachers and 14 females and 11 males had lived in other foreign countries for more than 2 years but less than 5 years. Living in foreign countries should give teachers a more flexible attitude towards different values, attitudes, opinions and cultures. If teachers are tolerant of these differences, they are more likely to accept students' national idiosyncrasies and class teaching is more likely to go well.

Table 5.6 shows the sort of Japanese institution where these teachers work. Most of the teachers to whom I distributed questionnaires in 2005 work at a university.

Table 5.6 Types of institution where the female and male teachers in this study work

Institution	University	2-year college	Other	Both
Female	27	3	4	3
Male	31	1	6	8

These days, universities tend to hire for their classes native speakers of English who have higher degrees. Question 2 asks, "What is the highest degree you hold?" and the answers confirm that universities are mainly interested in enhancing the academic knowledge of students and teachers who have higher degrees are assumed to be good teachers. This question was asked to learn the level of teachers' academic experience of higher education.

Questions 7, "To what degree do you value students' culture and their people?" and 8, "How easily do you accept opinions, values and attitudes in the classroom which differ from yours?" reveal the level of these teachers' tolerance. In response to Question 7, most of the teachers said that they very much accept the culture of their students, their own culture, that of their

own people and that of the people from whom their students come. However, in response to Question 8, the teachers reveal how easily their acceptance of different opinions, values and attitudes fluctuates in the classroom. 22.5% of teachers feel that it is not easy to accept different opinions in the classroom, 29.4% of them said that they do not easily accept different values in the classroom and 27.8% of the teachers said that they do not easily accept different attitudes in the classroom.

In the following sections I explore areas of potential low-level and high-level conflict that the teachers encountered.

5.8.1 The types of low-level conflict with their students that the teachers encountered

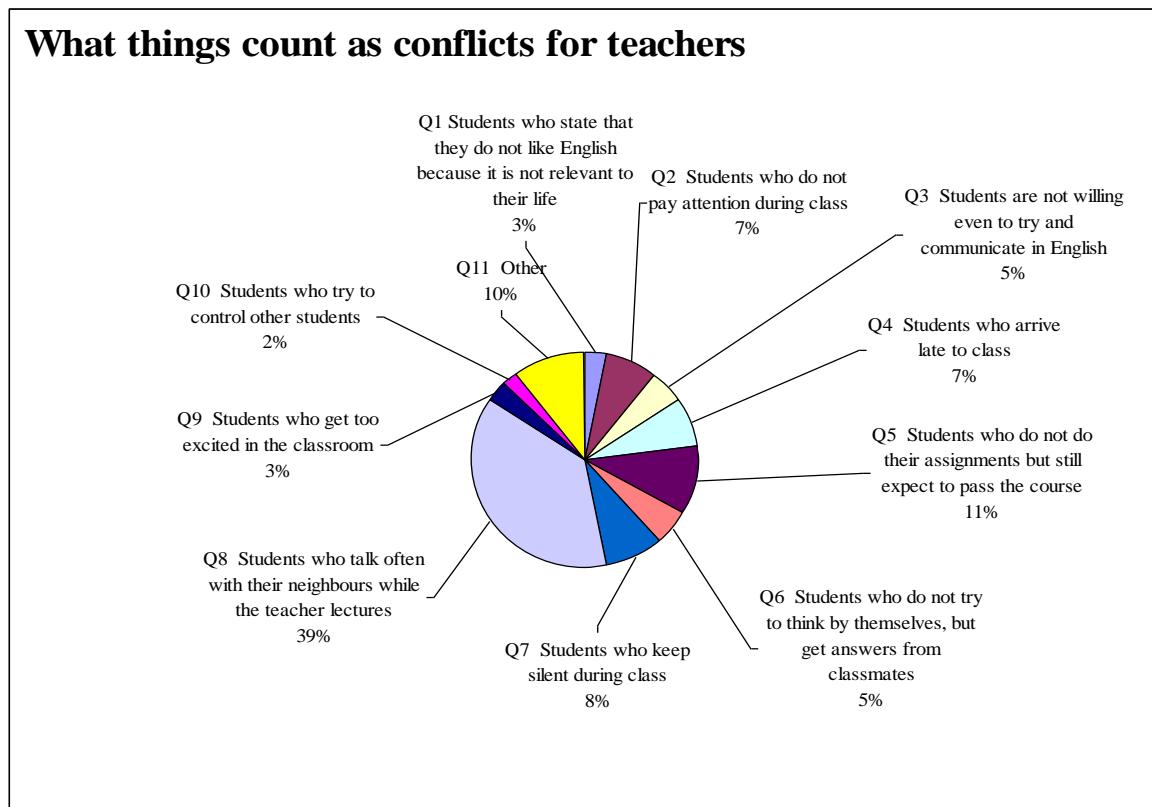
As with students, I was interested to see what kinds of conflict the teachers had encountered in class. Therefore, in the questionnaire, Question 9 listed eleven types of conflict and asked the teachers to indicate how patient they felt towards these different situations. 11 items and each question focused on the classroom situation in universities and 2-year colleges where native-speaking English teachers hold a different power relationship with the students from that held by Japanese English teachers. Teachers were asked in each question to indicate their degree of tolerance in the classroom and to reveal their own areas of conflict if these were not included among the items. The answers to this question reveal how patient the teachers felt when faced with these different kinds of conflict.

The conflicts which the teachers claimed to affect their teaching occur in the proportions shown in Graph 5.22. The categories of conflict are listed in 11 questions in the teacher questionnaire. Question 9 runs “Have you had any of the following conflicts with your

students? Below is a list of examples of conflict you may have had with your students whom you do not like or you do not get along with". There are 11 items in this list: 1) Students who state that they do not like English because it is not relevant to their life: this has the label "English"; 2) Students who do not pay attention during class, labelled "Concentration"; 3) Students who are not willing even to try and communicate in English, labelled "Communication"; 4) Students who arrive late to class, labelled "Late"; 5) Students who do not do their assignments but still expect to pass the course, labelled "Assignments"; 6) Students who do not try to think for themselves, but get answers from classmates, labelled "Answer"; 7) Students who keep silent during class, labelled "Silence"; 8) Students who talk often with their neighbours while the teacher lectures, labelled "Talking"; 9) Students who get too excited in the classroom, labelled "Excited"; 10) Students who try to control other students, labelled "Monoplization". If teachers have more conflicts than are listed in the questionnaire, they are asked to identify their own conflict in Question 11, in a category labelled "Other".

Graph 5.22 shows which conflicts affect teachers when they are teaching.

Graph 5.22 What things count as conflicts for teachers



According to Graph 5.22, 36 teachers have a conflict with students who talk often with their neighbours while the teachers lecture; 10 teachers have a conflict with students who do not do their assignments but expect to pass the course; 8 teachers have a conflict with students who keep silent during class; 7 teachers have a conflict with students who do not pay attention during class and with students who arrive late to class.

A Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted on these data to see if there were significant differences between the genders in terms of the types of conflict they perceived to be annoying. The results, which are shown in Tables 5.7 indicate that there were no such differences.

Table 5.7 Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
English	1	37	43.42	1606.5
	2	46	40.86	1879.5
	Total	83		
Attention	1	37	40.5	1498.5
	2	46	43.21	1987.5
	Total	83		
Communication	1	37	38.97	1442
	2	46	44.43	2044
	Total	83		
Late	1	37	39.77	1471.5
	2	46	43.79	2014.5
	Total	83		
Assignments	1	37	43.22	1599
	2	46	41.02	1887
	Total	83		
Answer	1	37	40.91	1513.5
	2	46	42.88	1972.5
	Total	83		
Silence	1	37	42.39	1568.5
	2	46	41.68	1917.5
	Total	83		
Talking	1	37	44.3	1639
	2	46	40.15	1847
	Total	83		
Excited	1	37	44.31	1639.5
	2	46	40.14	1846.5
	Total	83		
Monopolization	1	37	40.97	1516
	2	46	42.83	1970
	Total	83		

	English	Attention	Communication	Late	Assignments	Answer	Silence	Talking	Excited	Monopolization
Mann-Whitney U	798.5	795.5		739	768.5		806	810.5	836.5	
Wilcoxon W Z	1879.5	1498.5		1442	1471.5		1887	1513.5	1917.5	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	-0.528	-0.547		-1.089	-0.799		-0.524	-0.394	-0.141	
a	0.598	0.584		0.276	0.424		0.6	0.694	0.888	
								0.351	0.411	0.717

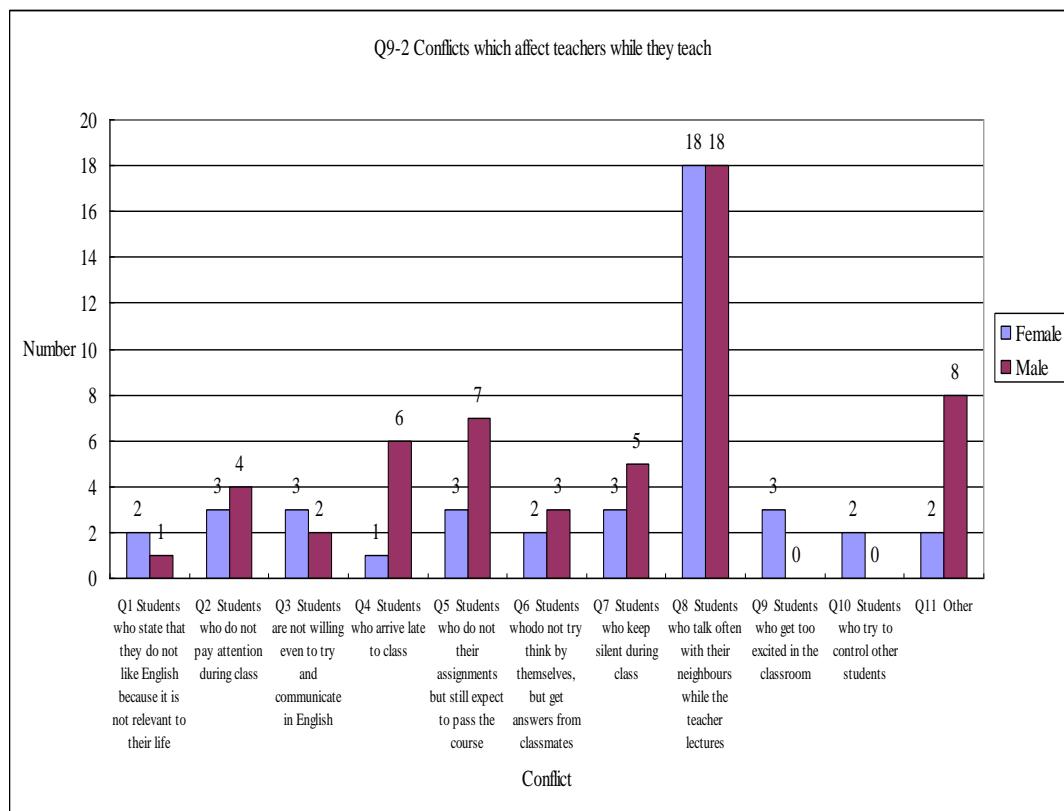
a Grouping Variable: Gender

5.8.2 Results concerning the ways in which the teachers dealt with low-level conflict

Teachers were asked to choose one or two examples out of a possible 11 which affected their teaching in the classroom. Graph 5.23 shows the conflicts which affect teachers as they

teach.

Graph 5.23 Conflicts which affect teachers as they teach, showing gender differences



According to the above graph, 36 teachers answered on the ways that teachers deal with item 8, ‘Students who talk often with their neighbours while the teacher lectures’. This kind of student interrupts the lecture and annoys other students who want to listen to it. Whenever the teacher has to tell students to be quiet, the flow of the lecture is halted. The teacher feels frustrated because of the noise level.

3 female teachers out of 18 can give no reasons why this behaviour occurs, but they have strategies to cope with it: scolding the students or warning them. 15 teachers stated that this was a distraction and that they had strategies to cope with it: 1) asking such students to leave

the room; 2) warning them; 3) moving them to a different seat; 4) asking students who talk to go to sleep; 5) asking why they talk and telling them to concentrate on the lecture; 6) staring at them until they become quiet; 7) waiting for them to be quiet; 8) giving them the choice of being quiet or leaving the class; 9) talking to them after the lesson. Strategies 1) and 4), however, hinder students from learning; therefore, teachers who use these strategies do not motivate students to come to class and study English.

18 male teachers felt a similar conflict. 3 teachers did not state the reasons why they think this is a conflict, but they have strategies: strictness, telling the students to be quiet or giving them something to do. One male teacher said that there was a gap between what teachers wanted to teach and what students wanted to learn, so the teacher explained any difficult content and changed to a topic which the students found easier. Other teachers gave as reasons the fact that chatter made the room noisy and interrupted lectures, annoying other students. Their strategies were: 1) giving warnings; 2) asking such students to leave the room; 3) asking them to stop talking; 4) scolding them; 5) giving them something to do; 6) threatening them; 7) appealing to the other students to make the talkative students quiet.

Male teachers in general used the same strategy as female teachers did: they asked such students to leave the room. Worse than that, they threaten students who talk during lectures. These negative strategies do not motivate students to learn. Instead of using such strategies, teachers should make teaching plans which are more attractive for students. Teachers tend to use their authority to control students in the classroom, instead of finding out why students chatter to their neighbours during lectures.

Twelve teachers chose to answer in the ways that teachers deal with item 5: ‘Students who do not do their assignments but still expect to pass the courses’. As English is a general subject, students want merely to pass the course, if possible without doing assignments, but they are prepared to sit in the classroom. These students claim that the teacher should give them credit for attending. If the teacher fails many students for neglecting their assignments, they may complain that the teacher did not help them to pass the course. The administration office then gives the teacher a low rating because the office wants as many students to pass as possible and do not like to organize classes for those re-taking the course.

3 female teachers found a conflict here. The reasons for this are that this attitude lowers other students’ motivation, and makes it seem foolish for any student to do assignments. One of their reasons is that other teachers give credits on the basis of reports, instead of marks from assignments.

7 male teachers also felt the same conflict, for which they have their own reasons and strategies: 1) One teacher stated that this attitude is childish and selfish so he was patient with these students and later talked to them; 2) One teacher mentioned the fact that there are special students, such as seniors or students who are good at sport, and teachers must not fail such students because the administration office and the faculty want them to graduate or pass the course. Sometimes they force teachers to pass such students; 3) teachers sometimes fail students for not doing their assignments; 4) they do so because it would be unfair to other students to pass someone who does not do the work; 5) 2 teachers explain to students that they will fail, and ask them what result they in fact want; they appeal to such students to be more adult and rational.

Point 2 above has become very problematic for teachers, in particular for part-time teachers because they are afraid of getting a low evaluation from the administration. Full-time English teachers also suffer because of these students. Students who want to excel in sports devote themselves to practice, not to studying English. As schools want to attract as many students as possible, so as to improve their finances, they allow any students of all kinds to enroll. Sports enthusiasts want most to be better at their sport; they often miss more classes than other students do. The administration sometimes asks teachers to give extra assignments to the sports enthusiasts in order to bring them up to pass standard. In their final year, in particular, even if such students do not deserve to pass, the administration obliges teachers to let them through. This is very unfair to other students.

8 teachers chose to answer on the ways that teachers deal with item 7: ‘Students who keep silent during class.’ Unfortunately, Japanese culture values silence as a social virtue, but in the classroom, teachers want to hear what students think. If students keep silent during class the teacher understandably wonders if they have understood the lecture or not. In language classes, students are supposed to speak up when they are engaged in pair or group work activity. Teachers find it difficult to assign co-workers in pairs or groups to these silent students. But such students will not be a problem if lecturing is the mode of teaching.

One female teacher uses a points system and makes students responsible for passing the course. Silent students cause other students to lose motivation, so the teachers try to choose topics which will interest the majority and encourage them, often changing their teaching materials. In conversation classes, teachers expect students to speak the language and if they

do not practise and use their oral skills, teachers must develop lesson plans in which no one can remain silent.

5 male teachers responded that this was a cause of conflict with them. They did not mention the reasons for this, but they have strategies to deal with it: 1) being patient and talking to students individually; 2) asking students to discuss the subject as a group or asking them to do tasks in which talking is obligatory; 3) addressing students by name and calling them to reply; 4) asking simple questions; 5) passing over students if they do not answer, and asking other students the same question.

One female teacher (and 6 male teachers) responded to item 4: ‘students who arrive late to class.’ She stated that this practice was a distraction to learning and, as a solution, she deducted points according to the degree of lateness from their test scores when she evaluated these students. This strategy may be common, because some teachers evaluate the level of attendance among the points awarded on the course. Low level students want this kind of points system so as to get credits with the least trouble.

The 6 male teachers who felt the same conflict stated that it wasted time and was a distraction because teachers had to repeat their explanations for the late-comers, disturbing the atmosphere of the class and missing other important points in the lectures. Male teachers use the following strategies: 1) ignoring late arrivals until class is over and talking to them one by one; 2) asking their reasons for being late and giving a warning; 3) treating them as if they were absent from class.

Students who are late interrupt the lecture, miss part of it and disrupt other students' study. This will cause some conflict both between teachers and latecomers and amongst students, which will worsen if teachers do not find ways of coping with these students.

In response to item 2, 'Students who do not pay attention during class', teachers usually expect students to listen to their lectures, but some students cannot concentrate long and they start to talk with their classmates, use their mobile phones or send emails. 3 female teachers stated the reasons for their conflict as the distraction this caused both teachers and students. Clearly, if students talk on mobile phones, they cannot participate in an English conversation class, and teachers lose the motivation to teach. The teachers' strategies are: 1) telling students to stop using the mobile phone; 2) trying to gently remind the student of the need to take part; and 3) warning or ignoring such students.

5 male teachers also responded that this annoyed them. They too see these students as a distraction, because such behaviour is selfish, spoiling the atmosphere in the classroom, and making a noise. Their strategies to solve this conflict are: 1) being patient with these students and talking to them one by one after class; 2) evaluating class participation among the criteria for credits; 3) leaving them to continue and, after class, talking to them individually; 4) giving verbal warnings or threats.

Both female and male teachers have similar strategies to solve these conflicts, such as giving warnings, and talking to students one by one after class. They seem to have ways of handling this conflict.

5.8.3 Summary of types of strategy that the teachers in this study used to deal with low-level conflicts

Teachers' responses showed many ways of handling students who hinder teaching and studying in the classrooms, such as giving warnings, asking students to leave the room, being patient, evaluating class participation and trying to give simple and easy questions. The problem of students "who do not do their assignments but still expect to pass the courses", raises a different issue, one which lies between the administration and the teachers, because the former wants all the students to pass the courses, if possible, in order to save the cost of extra classes for the repeaters. But teachers do not want students to pass without doing their assignments, because this would be unfair to the students who do them; yet they are censured by the administration. As one of the solutions, some universities offer special courses for students who are sports enthusiasts. However, we have not heard of any research into whether or not these courses are successful for the students, or the teachers. It is most important for teacher to have good strategies for motivating students to learn English in class.

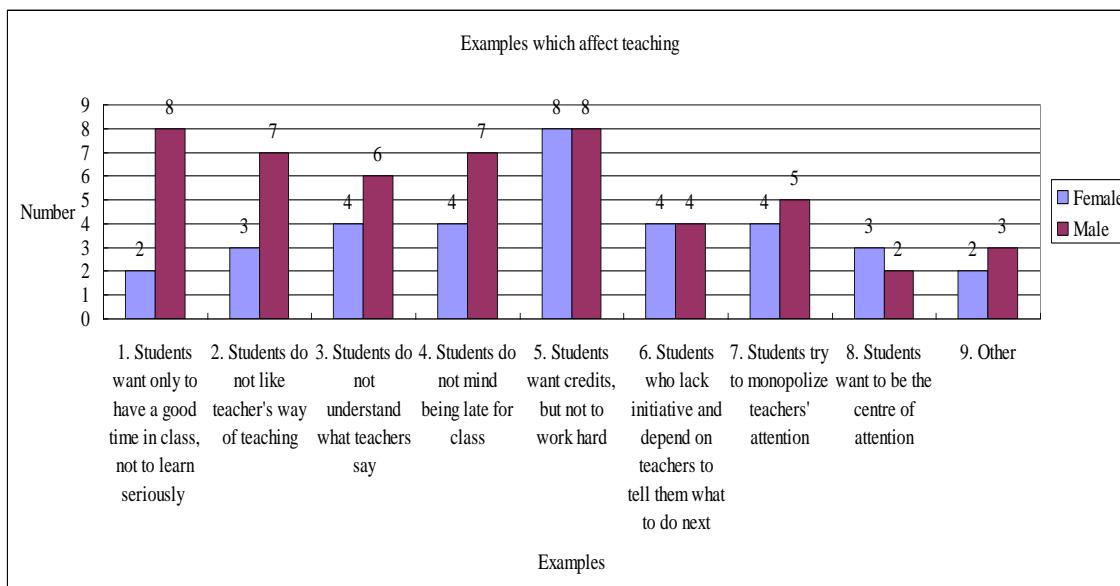
5.9 What types of serious conflict had these teachers encountered with their students?

In this section I move on to look at the more serious types of conflict that the teachers had experienced and at the ways in which they dealt with this conflict.

5.9.1 The types of serious conflict which teachers encountered with their students (Questions 10-1)

Question 10-1 asked teachers to respond to 9 items, all of which related to serious differences, frustration and bad feelings that they had had with their students. Graph 5.24 shows the number of positive responses to each item.

Graph 5.24 Examples which affect teaching in class



Graph 5.24 indicates that more male teachers than female teachers felt that items 1: ‘Students who want only to have a good time in class, not to learn seriously’, 2: ‘Students who do not like your way of teaching’, 3: ‘Students who do not understand what you say’, 4: ‘Students who do not mind being late for class’ and 7: ‘Students try to monopolize your attention’ affected class teaching. There were no gender differences in the responses to items 5: ‘Students who want credits, but not to work hard’ and 6: ‘Students who do not accept your opinions’.

5.9.2 Results concerning the ways in which these teachers dealt with serious conflicts

(Question 10-2)

10 teachers chose to answer on the ways in which teachers deal with item 1: ‘Students want only to have a good time in class, not to learn seriously.’ This item shows how some students act in the classroom; they believe that the function of the teacher is to make lessons entertaining. Students complain that Japanese teachers are too serious in their teaching.

According to the responses shown in Graph 5.24, more male teachers than female find it hard to tolerate these students.

2 female teachers found this a distraction because students who simply want to have a good time in class lower the general motivation to learn and even though university or college students are expected to work all through the term. Teachers' strategies to cope with this are not to accept the students' view of what constitutes learning at university and college and, using interesting materials, to explain the importance of being logical and conscientious.

4 of the 8 male teachers who responded to this item mentioned that it is a distraction to other students and to the teachers because they had to stop lecturing and call instead for a class discussion. However, one teacher said that this did not work. In consequence, this teacher will refuse to teach such students next year, since this raised a serious problem in the classroom. 2 teachers have no strategies to deal with this conflict. It seems to take away their confidence in teaching. One teacher asked such students what they wanted to say and then asked the students to speak in English. He mentioned that this strategy worked and the students soon became quiet. Another teacher used threats to students who lacked the motivation to learn. These students who want only to have a good time in class and not to learn seriously do not have enough motivation to study, but give a great deal of trouble during lectures. However, it is not a good strategy to refuse to teach them; a better solution may be to find the reasons why these students want only to have a good time in class.

11 teachers chose to answer on the ways that teachers deal with item 2: 'Students who do not like the teacher's way of teaching'. In general, Japanese English teachers tend to teach

grammar, but native speakers of English tend to teach English for oral communication. Sometimes, one group of students wants to learn grammar while the group wants to communicate with the native speaker, but they cannot choose which approach is taken in the classroom. Teachers teach what they think they should, or what they are told to teach, even though some students may not like it. Hence, every teacher faces students who do not like what is being taught. Sometimes, teaching English for communication reduces the motivation of good students to learn English grammar because it offers a content which is too easy for them.

One female teacher has no strategy to deal with this conflict, but she has tried to be pleasant to such students and to treat them fairly. 2 teachers explained to such students the purpose of the lectures and gave them an opportunity to describe what would be the most effective teaching strategy for them.

3 male teachers out of the 8 who responded mentioned no reasons, but 2 of them had strategies to cope with such students: 1) showing them their grades often during semesters and changing their teaching methods; 2) trying to discover the reasons why these students do not like the teaching methods. 2 teachers think that these students are a distraction because they spoil the atmosphere in the classroom. One of the teachers ignores such students in class and talks to them individually afterwards. 2 teachers have no strategies to deal with students who do not concentrate on the lectures and who are reluctant to cooperate with the activities or tasks.

According to Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998), students who are critical of a teacher may be

behaving uncooperatively because they are tormented by a feeling that they are below standard and thus they attempt to destroy what makes them feel inadequate (p. 194). Moreover, students who have narcissistic disturbances are especially subject to distress in the face of academic frustration and failure (Yalom, 1996; p. 193). The best way to solve this problem is by attending sensitively to nonverbal cues, because attention is an important component of effective feedback. Empathic listening can assuage a student's hurt feelings so that the teacher and the student build a good relationship, and they work as a learning alliance to complete tasks. If teachers force such a student to follow authority, s/he will not attend classes or may arrive late for class, and become rebellious, "counterdependent". A key function of leadership is to achieve goals in the group and the teacher's attitude plays a crucial role in helping students to learn productively.

On point 2), it might be a good strategy to ask these students why they do not like the teaching methods. Sometimes, students want teachers to teach them as they remember being taught at senior or junior high school. This way of teaching is to write everything on the board for students to copy into a notebook. However, this method of teaching is hardly the best way to encourage students to learn for themselves or to be creative or independent. When students face new teaching methods, they tend to reject any which call for hard work. However, if teachers explain the rationale behind their teaching methods, the students may not complain about them. Teachers at university and college tend not to explain enough to the students, but expect students to accept their ways of teaching.

10 teachers chose to answer on the ways that teachers deal with item 3: 'Students who do not understand what you say'. A Mann-Whitney Test result indicates a significant result.

While teachers are fairly patient with these students, more male teachers than female feel in conflict with them.

Whatever language the teacher uses in the classroom, there will be always some students who do not understand them, while others do and are eager to learn more. If the teacher concentrates too much on the slow learners, the others become bored. Therefore the teacher may ignore those who do not understand for the sake of the rest. Naturally, this may sometimes hurt students' feelings.

3 female teachers think that lecturing to such students is meaningless, but they try to continue patiently until such students do understand, or give them different materials from the other students. One writes of a student who had reached 7th grade but could not even identify the letters of the Roman alphabet, which should have been learned in junior high school. Such students are increasing in number at universities and colleges in Japan. One female teacher does not allow such students to take the course. She monitors their level when they join the class and gives them instructions individually. This teacher may face some trouble from the administration if her class is a general English class, because all students are obliged to attend these.

One male teacher did not suggest any reason for the presence of such students but he regularly showed them their grades during semesters and chose teaching methods which were at an appropriate level for each of them. 2 male teachers felt that these students to be a distraction to teachers and students alike. They gave them warnings or threats. Other teachers noticed that the students' average ability to learn English is lower than it has ever been. Their

strategies are: 1) changing and fully explaining the content; 2) giving drills; 3) pairing less able students with good students so that one can learn from the other; 4) taking up the challenge of manipulating language (verbal or nonverbal) to the point where even beginners can more or less understand what is going on. Male teachers have more strategies to deal with this conflict than female teachers have. However, giving drills to students who do not understand what the teacher says may lower their motivation because drilling in pronunciation, spelling or ticking answers quickly bores students. Drills do not make students think.

11 teachers chose to answer on the ways teachers deal with item 4: ‘Students who do not mind being late for class.’ More male teachers than female feel conflict with students who come late to class. Obviously every teacher wants all students to come to class on time.

All 4 female teachers who felt that students’ lateness is a distraction said that it was because it interrupts other students in their learning and stops the flow of the lecture. Their strategies to deal with such students are: 1) telling them that they must come to class punctually; 2) calling the register at every class; any three late arrivals count as one absence; 3) counting each late arrival as one absence and allowing students only 3 absences in any semester; 4) talking to them individually after class.

6 male teachers felt that late attendance was a distraction because the students who come late to class disrupt the atmosphere in the classroom, the other students and the lecture. One teacher did not supply reasons for feeling a sense of conflict with students who are late for class. But 7 teachers have strategies to cope with this problem: 1) ignoring such students at the time and talking to them individually after class; 2) regularly showing them their grades

during the semester and choosing teaching methods which are appropriate for each of them; 3) giving warnings; 4) asking why they are late for class and telling them to come on time; 5) making a teacher-student contract in terms of “If you are late to class, you will be counted absent”; 6) scolding and explaining the importance of being punctual.

Both female and male teachers make an effort to encourage students to come to class on time. Strategy 2) above seems to work well because this gives a quantified warning, and students cannot make excuses. One particular strategy which both female and male teachers use is to call the register at every class. The administration may allow part-time teachers to take the attendance register for them, since taking attendance in class is one of the teacher’s jobs.

15 teachers chose to answer on the ways that teachers deal with item 8 ‘Students who want credits, but not to work hard.’ Some students get the answers from their neighbours or copy their assignments; plagiarizing answers is widespread among students, who do not think it is wrong. Students pretend that they themselves did the assignments or found the answers for themselves. This reduces the level of motivation to work hard among the serious students.

One out of the 7 female teachers did not mention the reasons why she felt it a conflict, but 6 of the female teachers said that these students distracted the others. They said that such students should not pass the course, but one teacher mentioned a case where other teachers had begged her to let such students pass. The strategies which the female teachers use are: 1) giving up; 2) choosing teaching methods suited to students who are not motivated to learn; 3) discussing the issue with the class and explaining to them the importance of making an effort to pass the course; 4) telling them that they must make an effort to pass the course; 5)

being patient with them.

8 male teachers responded to this item. 2 of them did not give any reason why they felt a conflict with such students, but 6 of them stated that 1) they felt the reason was that the students who did not work hard demoralized the other students in the classroom; 2) that it was a waste of time to repeat the lectures for their benefit; 3) that it lowered the morale of other students who were motivated to learn. Their strategies are: 1) ignoring them at the time and talking to them individually after class; 2) encouraging the students and monitoring them carefully; 3) giving them warnings and extra tasks to do; 4) telling them to study simply to gain the necessary credits; 5) persuading them or giving them extra assignments; 6) keeping a minimal standard for passing the course, as an inducement to help everyone attain it.

Strategy1), "...talking to them individually after class" is often impossible for part-time teachers because they have other classes to teach elsewhere. Usually they must set off directly after they finish teaching in one place to arrive at the next on time. It should be recalled that nowadays university and college administrations, for budgetary reasons, hire more part-time teachers than full-time teachers to teach English.

16 teachers chose to answer on the ways that teachers deal with item 6: 'Students who lack initiative and depend on teachers to tell them everything.' They found such students a problem. Japanese students at school are accustomed to being told what to do and how to do it; therefore, they tend always to look to the teacher for instructions and not work out for themselves what they should be doing. It is frustrating, however, beyond the level of school to be constantly expected to spoon-feed students.

One of the 3 female teachers gave no reasons for finding these students a problem, but 2 of them said that they objected because such students cannot attain the goals of the course and they have a passive attitude to learning. All of them, however, have strategies to deal with it. These are: 1) making such students think for themselves; 2) asking them to find their own topics and submitting them to the teacher for approval; 3) explaining the aims of each task and the procedure for completing it in written form and giving the students clear instructions.

4 male teachers felt this sort of student to be a distraction because it creates inertia among students and confusion in learning and discussions. Though one of them gave no reason for finding a conflict with such students, they all had certain strategies: 1) regularly showing the students their grades during the semester and choosing teaching methods which were at an appropriate level for each of them; 2) playing games in order to make students talk; 3) devising detailed preparation exercises for every class, gradually increasing their difficulty and encouraging more individual initiative; 4) calling for students to answer by name.

Relying on teachers to tell students what to do next is a relic of the school classrooms to which the students have previously been accustomed. Teachers who teach at universities and colleges, however, generally want their students to be independent, even though students would rather rely on external instructions. One female teacher said that she made such students think for themselves, but gave no description of how this was done. Teachers may have no clear idea of what works for these dependent students.

9 teachers chose to answer on the ways that teachers deal with item 7: 'Students who try to

monopolize the teacher's attention.⁷ Some students want to be the centre of attention and interrupt group work or pair work. Other students rarely speak or do tasks alone which are meant for groups or pairs. This frustrates the teaching plan.

4 female teachers said that the reason that they felt a conflict with such students was that they distracted the teacher and made it impossible to concentrate on the lecture. Their strategies to deal with this are: 1) ignoring such students; 2) talking to them individually after class; 3) ignoring questions which are not related to the lectures; giving warnings. One of the 5 male teachers who gave reasons for his annoyance with these students feels it as a conflict, but they all had strategies to cope with such behaviour: 1) regularly showing these students their grades during the semester and choosing teaching methods which are at an appropriate level for each of them; 2) talking to them individually after class; 3) stipulating what is appropriate class behaviour; 4) giving warnings; 5) listening to them and giving more detailed instructions.

Students who show high motivation to learn more, for instance, by asking the teacher many questions, make teaching a pleasure; otherwise, students who merely talk incessantly are surely a distraction to teacher and class alike.

4 teachers mentioned their strategies when they chose to answer on the ways that teachers deal with item 8: "Students who want to be the centre of attention. More female teachers than male feel this to be a conflict. 2 of the 4 teachers gave no reasons, but the other two said that they felt them to be a distraction because the teacher wants to continue the lecture, and such students annoy other students. The teachers used the following strategies to deal

with this; regularly showing them their grades during the semester, choosing teaching methods which were appropriate for each of them and having such students learn a unit or a chapter in the classroom. However, none of them asked these students why they wanted to be the centre of attention in the classroom. There may be a need to find their reasons, so as to give the teacher better strategies to deal with this conflict.

6 teachers chose to answer on the ways that teachers deal with item 9: ‘Other’. 3 female teachers feel it to be a distraction when students fail to do assignments and write reports, and when they disturb other students and teachers by asking to leave the room. Moreover, the number of students who fall asleep in the classroom nowadays is increasing. The teachers’ strategies to deal with such disruptions are: 1) reminding students to go to the toilet before class starts; and 2) telling students that, if they leave the classroom during the lecture they will be counted absent. The number of students who interrupt the lesson for one thing or another has recently increased. University students still have to learn good manners at this level.

3 male teachers felt conflict with students who use “foul language” in class, who cannot accept different ideas, opinions or values from their own and who sleep in class. The teachers try to cope with such conflicts using the following strategies: 1) ignoring the students; 2) consulting counsellors or someone from the administration office about the problem; 3) giving feedback to students’ questions in their reports; 4) telling difficult students to sit down, behave as adults or leave the classroom.

5.9.3 Summary of the types of strategy which teachers used to deal with serious conflicts

Some serious conflicts which teachers have are conflicts with the administration, but most of

them are with students who hinder teaching. Teachers suffer frustration, harbour bad feeling towards students and have disagreements and differences of opinion with the students; this saps their confidence in class. To enhance learning and teaching in the classroom, strategies must be found to improve the situation.

5.10 Conclusion

From this study, the answer to Research Question 4 “How do Japanese university students feel about the current interaction in Japanese EFL classroom?” seems to be that they may not be aware of how little interaction there is in classrooms. In a competitive world, Japanese university students tend to concentrate on their learning so that they may get better grades than other students. This may be the reason why Japanese university students have strategies to request their dictionaries back from their peers or to refuse them to other students. Giving up and being patient with the teachers seems to them not a positive solution. This raises the question of whether teachers are actually needed for students to learn English.

Regarding Research Question 5: “How do Japanese university EFL students perceive and deal with interaction problems?”, they may think that interaction with peers hinders their own learning. As they may want to concentrate on their own study in the competitive classroom, they may not perceive this as a problem. This may lead to their strategies to deal with interaction problems; notably, ignoring, being patient and having no strategies. As they do not perceive interaction problems, they do not need strategies to deal with them.

Regarding Research Question 6: “Are there any gender differences in terms of the way in which the students perceive and deal with classroom interaction?”, female and male students

do seem to have different strategies for dealing with problems. Female students appear to use nonverbal responses such as gazing at or ignoring in dealing with classroom interaction, but male students use different strategies such as inviting the participation of classmates or advising them to think for themselves. The strategies which female students use seem an avoidance of the problem. More research is needed in this area.

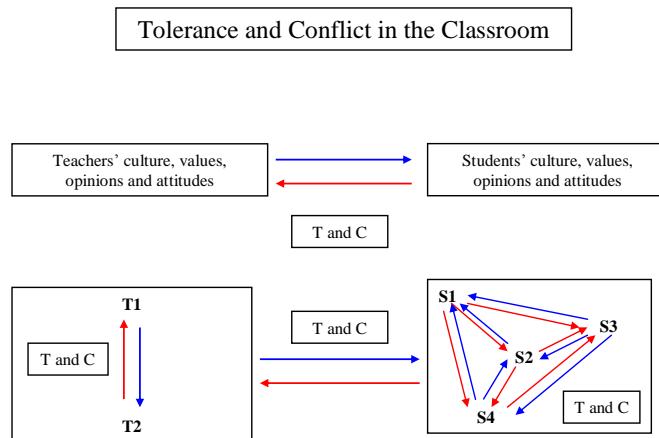
Finally, with respect to Research Question 7: "How do teachers perceive and deal with problems in Japanese university language classrooms?", I have found that teachers encounter a relatively high degree of conflict and they seem not to have appropriate strategies for dealing effectively with it. The students want the teachers to know how to teach, to answer their questions, and speak English with native-like pronunciation. However, neither female nor male students seem to have effective strategies for dealing with any sort of interpersonal conflict. In the classroom, even if all the students are Japanese, their social experiences are different. Each student must learn to tolerate the different values, ideas and opinions of the others. If the students come from different countries, this gap becomes even bigger and needs even more tolerance to accept different attitudes, ideas, opinions and feelings.

The teachers have conflicts with certain students; for instance, those who talk incessantly to their neighbours during lectures, who do not do their assignments but still expect to pass the course, who do not pay attention during class, who keep silent during class and who sleep in the classroom. The common strategies which the teachers use are ignoring such students, talking to them after class, giving up, being patient, explaining the content or the importance of being punctual, giving warnings and threats. The teachers seem to want the students to accept their methods of teaching. Both the English teachers and the students have suffered

because of such conflicts in the classroom and on the whole do not know what to do about them.

Figure 5.24 shows areas of conflict in the classroom between individual students, between Japanese English teachers and students, between native-speaker teachers and students and between Japanese teachers and native-speaker teachers.

Figure 5.24 Tolerance and conflict in the classroom



In this figure, T1 means “Teacher who is a native speaker of English” and T2 means “Japanese English teacher”. S1, S2, S3 and S4 mean “Students in the classroom”. T means “Tolerance” and C means “Conflict”.

In the concluding chapter, I sum up my findings, and make a number of recommendations based on these findings. I then outline the limitations of the study and make some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, my aim is to answer the research questions and discuss the implications of my findings and suggestions. Though my sample is limited to a small number of people and places in Japan, I believe I have found evidence to answer my seven research questions, listed below:

A) The theoretical primary research questions

- 1) What kind of visible and invisible inter-member relations exist between Japanese university students in the language classroom and how do they affect their learning?
- 2) How does the teacher's behaviour affect the students' behaviour, and what impact does it have on their learning?
- 3) How might cooperative methods benefit the learning of English in Japanese university language classrooms?

B) The practical questions implied by the above

- 4) How do Japanese university students feel about current interaction in Japanese ELT classrooms?
- 5) How do they perceive, and deal with interaction problems?
- 6) Are there any gender differences in terms of the way in which the students perceive and deal with classroom interaction?
- 7) How do teachers perceive and deal with problems in Japanese university classroom?

In order to answer these questions I combined data from both the qualitative and quantitative studies.

6.2 The first research question:

“What kinds of visible and invisible inter-member relations exist between Japanese university students in a language classroom, and how do they affect their learning?”

The findings made in this study confirm claims made by previous researchers with respect to inter-group relations between Japanese university students. When it comes to resolving their conflicts, Japanese university students in this study seemed not to know how to negotiate with other students of the same kind or with students who lack the motivation to study. Without student-student interaction, or with very little, they appeared to concentrate on studying by and for themselves, even in the classroom. This leads to the conclusion that the Japanese students in this study tend to work individually and competitively under great pressure to get good grades or credits; this was what I saw in all the classes that I observed, apart from the class at a state university which the Canadian teacher taught. Under their traditional and authoritarian teachers, the students in this study tended to keep quiet during their classes. Johnson (1995) argues that a competitive goal structure promotes cautious and defensive student-student interaction (p. 112). As he says, in this situation stronger students do not encourage weaker students, nor do they share their own opinions, thoughts or feelings with classmates. My observations on the whole endorse this. Johnson (1995), however, argues that, for educational success, student-student interaction, if managed effectively, is more important than teacher-student interaction:

...constructive student-student interaction influences students' educational aspirations and achievement, develops social competencies, and encourages taking on the perspectives of others (p. 112).

Through classroom observation and the responses to my questionnaire, I found that some Japanese students came late to class, slept during lectures, were silent in group work, used dictionaries instead of asking the teacher questions, ignored others, tried to be patient, or else had no strategies at all for dealing with their problems, whether from teachers or from peers. It would be useful if they could find better ways to deal with these problems through student-student interaction and teacher-student interaction.

It is anxiety, according to Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1995), which causes students to have an egocentric preoccupation with themselves; this disrupts cognitive reasoning and makes them avoid fearful situations (p. 20). Therefore, Japanese students perhaps need to learn to accept other people, so that they can learn cognitively:

They must deal with people they hardly know. They are uncertain about what membership in the group will involve, and whether they will be able to cope with the tasks. They observe each other and the leader suspiciously, trying to find their place in the new hierarchy. They are typically on guard, carefully monitoring their behaviour to avoid any embarrassing lapses of social poise (Dörnyei and Malderez 1997, p. 68).

As we saw in Chapter 2, Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) divide group development into four stages: 1) group formation, 2) transition, 3) performing and 4) dissolution. As students go through these stages, they form visible and invisible inter- and intra-relations of positive and/or negative kinds. They will confront other members of the group, but they should appreciate their differences and accept the classmates' collective diversity, with help from the teacher and other members of the groups. The students observed in this study exhibited problems at all stages of this process.

6.3 The findings for the second and seventh research questions: “How does the teacher’s behaviour affect the students’ behaviour, and what impact does it have on their learning?” and “How do teachers perceive and deal with problems in Japanese university classrooms?”

The main finding with respect to this question was that authoritarian teaching has a negative effect on the classroom climate. Through my observation of classes at state and private universities, and the responses from teachers and the students’ interviews, I can say that teachers’ behaviour is perceived to affect the students’ behaviour in the classroom and this behaviour impacts on their learning. In Japan, teachers are authoritarian and in the classroom this leads to a greater or lesser tendency to be narcissistic. Teachers may not recognize how little interaction is going on between them and the students in class. The students’ responses to my questions about their teachers indicate that Japanese teachers are not sufficiently creative and tend to lecture all the time. Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) divide this narcissistic phenomenon in teachers into two types: 1) the grandiose form, characterized by a need for admiration from others, a sense of entitlement, arrogance and lack of empathy; and 2) the depressive variant associated with narcissism (p. 215).

Grandiose narcissism can cause teachers to underestimate or even not perceive high-quality work by students, through a process of envious devaluation ... Envy of colleagues may lead either to feelings of rivalry with others who have contributed to their specialties or to a kind of “reaction formation” in which they uncritically accept everything (p. 216).

Authoritarian teachers tend not to interact with students, although interaction has been shown to improve learning (Gass, 1997). For example, the teachers themselves might even answer

their own questions. Such teachers tend to lecture, and do not provide opportunities for the students to express their opinions, thoughts and ideas. What Schmuck and Schmuck say of one group leader applies also to an authoritarian teacher:

He made virtually all of the group's decisions. He gave specific directions as to what the work was supposed to be and how it would be accomplished ... [he] kept and used all of the legitimate power that was given to him (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, p. 233).

This attitude seems to stunt the development of group work and hinder its progress. The teachers whom I observed at a private university often exclaimed, "Quiet!" They did not give students a chance to talk. Through their behaviour, these autocratic teachers inhibited both student-student interaction and student-teacher interaction. As a result the students could not develop congruency in groups. Tuckman's development for groups has five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning (1997). Authoritarian teachers are obstacles to group development and they tend to ignore the diversity among students.

6.4 The findings for the third research question: "How might cooperative learning benefit learning in Japanese language classrooms?"

Now, having answered the first question on intermember relationships, the second on teachers' behaviour, and the seventh on teachers' perceptions and ways of dealing with pedagogic problems, I turn to the third research question, which asks how a focus on cooperative learning might improve learning in Japanese language classrooms.

Although the study has not empirically tested any claims for the ways in which cooperative learning might benefit learning in Japanese university EFL classrooms, its findings have

provided some strong pointers to the directions that teachers and researchers might take in this area. I have found that a lack of cooperative learning has a detrimental effect on language acquisition. Therefore if we can find ways to encourage cooperative learning this should, in theory, lead to better EFL teaching and learning.

In Chapter 2, Table 2.3 tells us that, in the late 1930s, interpersonal competition in Japanese universities began to be emphasized and that, in the late 1960s, individualistic learning began to be used extensively. Competitive and individualistic learning situations have thus traditionally dominated cooperative learning in schools, and, partly as a result of this, an educational crisis occurred in the 1970s-1980s. Since then, universities have continued to provide unsuitable learning environments for students (Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001, pp. 8-9). This has made classroom climates more competitive and individualistic, which is likely to lead to problems in the area of cooperative learning.

In this study I have found that individualistic learning, the existence of conflict and excessive competition are all detrimental to learning. A good way forward would therefore be to address these three issues. Sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2 and 6.4.3 look at ways in which this might be done.

6.4.1 Countering the individualistic learning approach

The Japanese students whom I observed appeared to be passive learners and had few strategies for solving their learning and social problems. Ehrman & Dörnyei (1998), Olson and Kagan (1992, 1997), and Johnson and Johnson (1995) suggest that a strong focus on cooperative learning will partly remedy the individualistic learning approach. If Japanese

students studied effectively in small groups, and spent more of their class time working and learning together, they would benefit. However, Johnson (1995) warns teachers that simply separating students into small groups does not set group dynamics in motion; consequently, the decision to arrange group work obliges teachers to consider two issues together: 1) how the learning goals are now to be structured; and 2) how conflicts among students are to be managed (p. 112). Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1995) argue that cooperative learning works effectively when teachers structure and promote clearly perceived positive interdependence and considerable face-to-face interaction (p. 47).

6.4.2 The advantages of admitting conflicts

In this study we have seen that conflicts exist in the language classroom in Japan and that these conflicts can be detrimental to learning. Conflicts exist everywhere; in class, group members can quickly turn into adversaries and conflicts can escalate. People compete against each other and begin to dislike each other, because some competing group members succeed when others fail (Wilson, 2002, pp. 412-413). However, Wilson argues that group conflicts cease to escalate when members try to negotiate with other members, for everyone's benefit (p. 435). Hence, teachers should not be afraid of conflicts in groups. Dörnyei and Murphey (2003, pp. 141-142) argue that these are in fact beneficial in four areas: they can 1) increase student involvement, 2) provide an outlet for hostility, 3) promote group cohesiveness and 4) increase group productivity. What they suggest as a resolution for conflicts is that teachers should not try to suppress, deny, ignore, minimize or bypass them (p. 142), but use them to improve group dynamics.

Wilson (2002) suggests some useful methods of conflict management, as follows: not to ask

students to 1) communicate more or 2) cooperate more; but to tell them instead that they should not: 3) blame other people or the group; 4) attack another person or persons; 5) be too general; 6) avoid conflict; and 7) try to keep people talking so long that they give up (pp. 272-274). Teachers tend to say, “‘Communicate more’ or ‘Cooperate more’” without giving any reason or offering any strategy to resolve conflicts.

6.4.3 Suggestions for improving teachers' ability to manage competition in the classroom

To improve teachers' ability to manage competition between students, it is helpful if they share with other teachers the problems which they face in class, and give each other tips to try out in class. Teachers should suggest various ways forward for their students because their abilities and language levels are varied. Then, after teachers have tried out the new strategies, they can report whether or not they were useful. Teachers will in this way also learn how to negotiate with other teachers – which is not easy when all teachers have individual personalities, characteristics, values, opinions and teaching methodologies. They will suffer fear of unknown teachers, envy, disappointment, frustration and competition. Good academic leaders, however, sustain the communication among teachers about ways to improve professionally, even when administrations these days for financial reasons prefer to appoint part-time lecturers. Discussions among teachers may be a problem, but in this case email and other forms of electronic communication may provide a partial solution. It is, of course, best for English education if full-time teachers can be appointed. It is also effective to give teachers study leave in which to learn psychoanalytical theory in order to manage problems and conflicts in class, because this plays a vital role in solving teaching problems and raising the level of tolerance (Ehrman, 1998, p. 26). Language learning in particular involves emotions and personality.

In the course of teaching, teachers often know what procedures are not working or what part of their activities the students do not understand. It is valuable to note these down and use them to improve teaching in the future. It is also a good idea to videotape classes as often as possible at an early stage of the semester. This is a useful way of observing one's own teaching; it shows how students learn and how much interaction occurs in the classroom and leads to better teaching and empathy as teachers, because it tells them about problems, conflicts and their effects.

In classrooms, groups exist for one semester or one year. The more students meet with the members of their group, the better they understand each other, and the more they cohere; this is the key factor for cooperative learning. Students then take responsibility for managing their problems and find enough time to attain their goals and carry out their tasks.

If there is no cohesiveness and friendliness among members in the students' academic settings, extracurricular groups will garner most of their time, and grades usually suffer. However, when students feel a part of a class and responsible to each other, they will usually find ways to manage their time. Teachers can help by explicitly explaining these things in class so that students can make more informed choices and plan their time better (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p. 72).

6.5 The findings for the fourth, fifth and sixth research questions: “How do Japanese university students feel about the current interaction in Japanese EFL classrooms?” “How do they perceive and deal with interaction problems?” and “Are there any gender differences in terms of the way in which the students perceive and deal with classroom interaction?”

The responses to the student questionnaire suggest that Japanese university students may not perceive how little interaction they have with their teacher in class. They know that teachers

are authoritative figures who should not be challenged by questions; instead, they use CDs and dictionaries, ask their neighbours, or study alone, give up, or have no strategies at all. As Anderson (1993) says, they are “passive listener-participants” (p. 107).

Moreover, since students rarely challenge a professor’s authority, even a teacher’s direct verbal invitation for questions is seldom interpreted as a genuine willingness to open the floor, but often simply as a polite way to close out a topic (Anderson, 1993, p. 102).

Regarding interactions between student and student, Japanese university students appear to have negative strategies for dealing with classroom problems. Their strategies are “Being patient” “Ignoring” and “Having no strategies.” There are gender differences in dealing with the problems; for instance, strategies for classmates who only pretend to participate in group work, for students who are slow to return borrowed dictionaries, or students who do not express their opinions. For these problems, students seem both to have verbal strategies, such as requesting the return of their dictionaries, inviting or waiting for silent students to express their opinions, and advising them to think for themselves. However, female students tend also or instead to deal with the problem by non-verbal strategies, such as gazing or staring. Female students seem also to express themselves emotionally as a way of dealing with the problems, for example, by being angry or by asking over-excited students to leave.

According to Yepez (1994), gender difference influences the classroom climate and interaction inequities could hinder or harm knowledge acquisition for males and females (p. 122). Yet my observations show no different treatment between genders. What Hall (1982, cited in Yepez, 1994) calls ‘inequities’ are such things as teachers not calling on females in class, calling men students by name more frequently than female students, calling males by their family name and females by their given name, and giving males more time to answer

than females (p. 123). In fact, I saw none of these. I saw teachers taking attendance systematically by calling the family names or given names one by one, with each student answering by “Yes” or “I’m here.” (Teachers address their students according to the teacher’s or the student’s preference. Following students’ preference in this matter may, I suppose, prevent some inequities, even if there is little further interaction between teacher-student and student-student.)

As regards waiting for answers, Japanese students know that teachers tend to allocate questions one by one according to the attendance list or the seat numbers, so they can easily guess who will receive the next question and try to get the answer from a neighbour, if necessary. In this situation, teachers do not seem to give more time to male students than female students, but studies claim that they do, when necessary. I did not ask the teachers whom I interviewed at state and private universities if they gave more time to male students to reply than to female students. It would however be useful to investigate it in further research. However, Yepez (1994) raises the question of whether teachers may not be aware of gender inequities when they teach; hence, they may not recognize this issue, which makes it very difficult to investigate. The teachers whom I observed, apart from the Canadian, seemed happy to get answers from all their students alike, implying that gender inequity did not seem to affect the climate of general interaction inequity in the classrooms.

However, the fact that male and female students have rather different ways of dealing with conflict needs to be taken into account by teachers when they are working with classroom management issues.

Next, I would like to discuss the gender inequities in learner-learner interactions. All the classes in my research at state and private universities used pair work or group work. Pair work or group work is supposed to increase the beneficial opportunities for classroom communication and spoken interaction. According to Sunderland (1992), however, male students speak more frequently and take longer turns than females, who provide more feedback (p. 89).

Gass and Varonis (1986, p. 349, cited in Shehadeh, 1999) and Sunderland (1992) claim that men differ from women in the part which each plays in conversation, and in the control which each has over the interaction of speakers (p. 258). Gass and Varonis (1986) note that:

Men took greater advantage of the opportunities to use the conversation in a way that allowed them to produce a greater amount of comprehensible output, whereas women utilized the conversation to obtain a greater amount of comprehensible input (p. 258).

However, in the interaction in female/male and male/male dyads in classes which I observed at one of the private Japanese universities, the stronger female students (S7) and S8 (male) talked more than their weaker male students. This appears to challenge earlier findings on classroom gender differences.

6.6 The findings for the seventh research question, “How do teachers perceive and deal with the problems in Japanese university classrooms?”

Though only 83 teachers responded to the teacher questionnaire, the result may tell us a little how teachers perceive and deal with their problems in the classroom. Teachers tend to deal with the problems which hinder teaching and studying in class by using warnings, asking students to leave the room, being patient, evaluating class participation and giving simple and

easy questions. Neither male nor female teachers want students to expect to pass the course without working. This raises a different problem between the administration and teachers. Both male and female teachers agree that the students can hinder their teaching by frequent talking with their neighbours during the lecture. However, they appear to have no good strategies for dealing with such problems.

As for the items affecting teaching in class, more male teachers than female ones saw the following as problems: 1) Students who want only to have a good time in class, not to learn seriously 2) Students who do not like the teacher's way of teaching 3) Students who do not understand what teachers say 4) Students who do not mind being late for class and 7) Students who try to monopolize the teachers' attention. The strategies which teachers of both genders use include: refusing to teach these students, threatening them, and ignoring them. The problem is that these are ineffective in changing the behaviour of such students and for encouraging other students to learn and study in class. Teachers often appear to be struggling in their work.

6.7 Generalizing the findings

The next point to discuss is how generalizable my findings are to other settings inside and outside Japan. My findings should be generalized with caution because of the limited sample, but they did not conflict with my previous experience.

6.7.1 Generalizing the findings within Japan

Here, I would like to introduce what other researchers say about Japanese university students in order to judge whether my findings show typical features of Japanese university ELT

classrooms.

First, Wadden and McGovern (1993), in suggesting some strategies for new foreign English teachers to use in Japanese university classrooms, argue that Japanese students' behaviour is the result of their particular cultural background, where, among other things, the following are customary: 1) the importance of silence; 2) the disruptive effect of talking; 3) sleeping in class; 4) tardiness; 5) inaudible responses; and 6) cheating (pp. 114-117). Except for item 6) on the above list, I found these listed as 'distractions' by the respondents. Silence and reticence in East Asia play an important role in the individual's moral disposition and in maintaining the harmony of the social order (Jones, 1999). Clancy (1986, pp. 213-214, cited in Jones, 1999) also notes that being silent is much more socially positive in this region than in the Western world. In Japan, silence, as a way of maintaining group harmony and values is the basis of communicative style. This is called empathy, or "*omoiyari*" in Japanese. Japanese children are raised with the traditional saying, "Silence is better than speech". In my study, S4, (a female student at a state university) said that she had always been taught to be silent or listen when the teacher was speaking and in my experience this is typical of many. For this reason, among others, students do not speak in the classroom. However, Lui and Littlewood (1997) argue that the idea of the passive learner who chooses to be silent is a myth (p. 172). They list the possible causes of students' apparent reticence as follows: 1) lack of experience in speaking English, 2) lack of confidence in spoken English, 3) anxiety from high performance expectation, and 4) their perception of the learner's role. In fact, S4 (a female student) revealed her anxiety to speak perfect English in English conversation classes.

It has been argued that Japanese students are often silent or passive, and that this is a feature

peculiar to them (Anderson, 1992, Jones, 1999). For example, they have seldom been found to initiate discussion, or bring up new topics, challenge the instructor, ask for clarification or answer voluntarily, but they ask a classmate to explain the part of the lesson that they have not understood, or less commonly consult the instructor after class. If a teacher has to wait too long for a student to answer, s/he generally loses patience and supplies the missing answer. This happened in one of the classes which I observed, taken by a Japanese English teacher at a state university. He asked a question and eventually answered it himself. The responses to my questionnaire from Japanese university students suggest that students do not have to answer because they know that teachers eventually answer their own questions. Therefore, students appear to give up offering answers or even finding them for themselves. This behaviour from teachers seems to exert a negative influence on students' learning, and students will not challenge teachers' authority by asking questions.

Indeed, I would like to take issue with some of the suggestions made to combat talkativeness, because in my view they do not encourage interaction in the classroom. Wadden and McGovern's suggestions for encouraging students to be silent and behave cooperatively are: giving students clear guidelines, staring at them, showing disappointment, emphasizing silence and standing up to disruptive students. Although I agree that it is very useful to give clear guidelines so that the students know why they need to listen to the teacher, I would first ask why they want to talk when I am speaking to them, because they might have good reasons for doing so. Then, if they want to ask good questions, I would praise them and bring the questions before the class. Students are generally keen to listen to their peers, hence, using pairs as models as often as possible reveals what other pairs do. When students understand the reasons for listening, I think they will probably concentrate on the lecture and

will encourage each other to listen as well. Showing the logic of an action is important for motivating people. Giving more opportunities for students to get involved in learning, using pair-work or group work or creative activities will probably help the students to interact with their classmates and teacher. As interaction improves learning, the students may together build up positive inter- and intra-relations. The more students interact, the less anxiety they have. I also use a timer when I call for pair-work and set tasks which I have carefully structured, so that students are more likely to use the limited time to complete the activities. In this way they have to concentrate on the tasks with their peers. Asking students to summarize the content of a text in their own words to make them try to comprehend its meaning and letting them express their opinions in their own words, with minimum error correction, are also valuable. They help students to realize that making errors does no harm and is in fact a good way to learn a language.

However, the teachers whom I observed at a private university often exclaimed “Quiet!”, although the effect was very short-lived and the students quickly resumed their conversations. This tells us that these teachers do not seem to have any effective strategies for countering such problems. These teachers appeared to prefer the students to keep quiet and not to interact with them. According to Graph 5.22 in Chapter 5, 36 teachers out of 83 responded that they were annoyed by students who talk often with their neighbours while the teacher is speaking, but they never ask why the students are talking or what the problems are. In response to this, I would claim that Japanese students’ behaviour is not merely the result of their cultural background, but is also a reaction to the teacher’s behaviour, which influences the way in which students behave and thus how they learn. One possible remedy is for teachers to try to be more creative, in order to motivate their students.

Since writers do not all agree about Japanese students' excessive silence and my sample is limited to a very small number of interviewees in Japan, a larger sample of students is needed before my findings on this subject can be generalized.

Second, as for the students who sleep in class, their recommended strategies are to have the student's partner waken her/him, lightly tapping the sleeper's shoulder, standing next to the student while addressing the class, or letting the student sleep, but removing his/her textbook and taking it to an empty desk. I think that these strategies probably work for a short time, but they appear not to solve the problem, because teachers do not ask why their students have gone to sleep. Not only did the students whom I observed sleep in class, but so do students in other classes at Japanese universities (Wadden and McGoven, 1993, p.116). This would suggest an appeal to teachers to be more creative or interact more with students in class, or stop crediting mere attendance when it comes to evaluation. Students know that their presence alone will earn them a class credit, so they attend passively. This suggests that the evaluation system probably needs to be reconsidered, because good attendances by students earn a good reputation for the teacher among the administrative staff. This may indeed influence the renewal of one's contract, for part-time lecturers above all, as T3 (a female teacher) mentioned in her interview. My experience of the Japanese university classrooms, where I have taught as well as observed, convinces me that these findings are typical of what goes on there.

As for tardiness, the teachers whom I observed at a state universities and the private university seemed to welcome students who came late for class and did not ever ask them

why they were late. One of the teachers at the private university was happy when the students came to class late. The teachers seemed not to be disturbed by the latecomers so long as they entered the room quietly, because this let them at least continue their lecture. However, this attitude probably suggests that any student can arrive late if s/he pleases and also confirms how little notice teachers take of students throughout the class, further evidence of the dominant one-way communication in Japanese EFL classrooms.

Now, I would like to discuss what people expect from teachers nowadays in Japan. This may suggest one of the reasons why teaching is not going well and why teachers suffer in trying to do their jobs.

6.7.2 People's changing expectations about the role of the teacher

In many countries, including Japan, violence and bullying by students and other problematic behaviour at university has recently increased and teachers have suffered as a result of having to manage these students in class. One of the causes of such features is the students' lack of experience with interpersonal relations and socializing with others (Foreign Press Center, 2001, p. 19). In competitive and individualistic circumstances, the students become passive recipients of knowledge and they do nothing to improve interpersonal relations among themselves or with the teacher.

In competitive situations communication and information exchange tends to be nonexistent or misleading and competition biases a person's perceptions and comprehension of the viewpoints and positions of other individuals. Individualistic situations are usually deliberately structured to ensure that individuals do not communicate or exchange information at all (Jonson, Johnson and Smith, 1995, p. 15).

Society expects teachers to solve these problems and therefore I think that it would help them

to enrol on seminars or receive training to learn psychoanalytic theory so as to manage problems in the classroom, as well as broadening their knowledge and expertise.

Having discussed whether or not my findings can be called typical, I would next like to discuss the limitations of my thesis, some implications of my findings and, finally, to make some recommendations.

6.8 Limitations of the thesis

Among the limitations of my thesis, first, the sample is limited to a certain number of students and teachers of English in Japan's universities. In particular, only 83 teachers of English felt able to respond to my questionnaires and I interviewed only 4 teachers. I would have liked to read more teachers' responses and to discuss with them how they try to cope with the fear of unknown students and teachers. I could then perhaps have discovered good strategies to resolve the conflicts between students and between teachers and students. Further research should certainly begin by collecting information in surveys and interviews from a larger sample of teachers.

First, for class observation and interviewing teachers after class, I explained the aims of my study and asked the English teachers whom I know whether I could observe their classes at a time of their choice. With their permission, I observed four classes at national and private universities. As regards interviewing teachers and students after class, I also got the interviewees' agreement to tape-record their interviews and they all willingly participated in my study. I analysed the data from these interviews qualitatively and quantitatively using the Mann-Whitney U test and demographically.

This sampling technique is best described as ‘opportunity sampling’, which may have skewed the data, but I was not able to choose which universities or classes I should visit; I was totally dependent on individual teachers’ understanding of my aims and their willingness to participate in my study. Therefore my samples of teachers are all self-selected. Some of the teachers who administered my questionnaires belonged to both the Japan Association for language teaching (JALT) and the Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET). When I explained my aims in this study, they all agreed to ask their students to answer my questions.

Second, I did not interview any students who were poorly motivated to learn English, nor any repeaters and, above all, no sports enthusiasts, although this group tends to influence the classroom climate, especially negatively. These students may give us better solutions for enhancing English teaching and learning in the classroom, which would be welcome, not least because repeat courses in English at Japanese universities have been on the increase. The students who take them may not have got past their discouraging memories of learning English when they were younger but they still have to gain credits in English at the university. Further research should certainly include these people.

As regards gender inequities between teacher and student, since I had only 83 responses to the questions from teachers, I feel it is too early to generalize. Therefore, gender inequities should perhaps be investigated systematically in future research. Among my other suggestions for further research would be to obtain more in-depth information about classes from more places in Japan, so as to understand more accurately what happens in lessons.

6.9 Some implications of the findings

This study has investigated visible and invisible inter- and intra-relations in Japanese university classrooms, and looked at how teachers' behaviour influences teaching and learning, how Japanese university students perceive the current interaction problems, whether gender differences in dealing with the problems can be found and how much the cooperative learning method benefits Japanese university language classrooms. I would now like to suggest some of the implications of these findings.

Through this study, I believe that I have shown Japanese students to be fairly passive recipients of knowledge who are ill-equipped to deal with conflict, and this may be one of the reasons that English education in Japan has not achieved what MEXT expects. In competitive situations, students may not develop appropriate group dynamics. As a result, they do not learn how to deal with different opinions, different individual personalities, or how to work together to complete tasks as a group (see Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1995, in Chapter 2, p. 68, above). One of the solutions may be cooperative learning, because it gives students less anxiety and stress than individualistic competitiveness does. This perhaps would encourage Japanese students to develop a higher level of reasoning strategies and critical thinking, so that they will be active recipients of knowledge and work internationally with people of other countries, as MEXT would prefer. Student-student interaction can lessen conflict, and promote cognitive learning if it is carefully prepared and managed appropriately (Johnson, 1995). Education in Japan may change from the old paradigm of teaching to the new, as described in Chapter 2.

As teachers' behaviour influences learning and the population of unmotivated students has been increasing in Japan, learning psychoanalytic theory appears to be one means to deal with the new problems. People's expectations about the role of the teacher are changing and therefore teachers should perhaps study this theory as soon as possible, for it may help them to handle unmotivated students and problematic behaviour in classrooms.

Finally, I would like to go through some of the implications of gender inequities. Yepez (1994) argues that gender differences influence the classroom climate and interaction inequities could hinder or damage knowledge acquisition for both males and females (p. 122). This may be questioned, because female and male students use different strategies to deal with the problems and, as noted above, further research is clearly necessary.

6.10 Some practical recommendations from the findings

I would like first, however, to list some recommendations as a result of the findings of this thesis. First, the classroom arrangements; to promote active teacher-student and student-student interaction and to let students at the beginning of semester get to know classmates as many as possible through pair work, desks and chairs, for example, should not be attached to the floor. Students may find it hard, but they should learn to work in pairs. They will appreciate the differences between classmates and the teacher can observe them more easily in the course of monitoring. Re-arranging the chairs and desks will permit more interaction between teacher and students, for it will be easy to locate the problems which some students have when pair-working. The students will surely go through anxiety, fear of unknown people, competition, anger, envy and conflicts, but if they are managed properly and the classroom atmosphere is encouraging, these will give way to positive intermember

relations before long.

Second, I would like to recommend teachers to videotape their sessions as often as possible to give them further insight into what is going on between pairs and how well they are being managed. At an early stage, another teacher should be able to see how to solve the problems or suggest more ways of working. All learners are different, but this will help the teacher to get to know them as individuals. Teachers as facilitators can learn how to provide a propitious climate in the classroom. It is better to get to know students individually as soon as possible after the semester begins and as soon as the students have learnt about the teacher. This will establish a good rapport between teacher and students, after which the class can be divided into groups. The teacher's knowledge of the students will support their division into viable groups, such as are likely to cooperate.

While the teacher's behaviour, as a group leader in the classroom, impacts on students' learning, equally, as Ehrman and Dörnyei say (1998), other students in the group are likely to exert an influence on each member's learning experience. Learning calls for sensitivity, so teachers should be sensitive to their students' personal emotional needs. Edge (1993) maintains that no two individuals have the same knowledge, or skills, or experiences, and students are all influenced by their age and their educational, social and cultural backgrounds (p. 9). Therefore, teachers would do well to observe individual students' feelings and emotions. Edge also gives a warning to teachers not to hurt students' feelings because a positive emotional environment in the language class is important (1993, p. 19). It may be an advantage for teachers to learn the necessary skills to resolve conflicts, given their role as counsellors as well as educators. The teachers in my study do not appear to have found good

strategies to solve their problems in teaching. In Japan, university teachers have few opportunities to learn how to handle conflicts or to learn psychoanalytic theory. So, if MEXT gave teachers in-service training to learn classroom management and psychoanalytic theory, it might help them. It is especially urgent to offer these at the moment, because record numbers of students with low language proficiency and poor motivation are due to enter Japanese ELT classrooms.

Third, since teachers will encounter more low-level students as the population of 18-year-old students decreases, I would like to recommend teachers to introduce themselves to psychoanalytic theory, if possible. In this way, they will be better able to deal with the problems in classrooms, aware that, as Ehrman and Dörnyei claim, language learning is a deep psychological process (1998, p. 16). Teachers will be expected to find different ways to treat the female and male students in their classes, because different genders can deal with their learning problems differently.

Fourth, the findings made in this thesis do not suggest that cooperative learning is likely to be complete panacea for all the problems that are currently faced by language departments in Japanese universities. Nor will it be easy to implement programmes that encourage cooperative learning in all Japanese universities as there are substantial systemic changes would need to be made. The best that we can perhaps hope for is a gradual change in the views of university teachers towards a more cooperative learning approach. Such change is more likely to be effective if it results from a bottom-up, rather than a top-down process.

At Japanese universities, teachers compete with one another, working individually to pursue a

career and being evaluated through their journal articles, books and presentations, but not by teaching. According to Kelly and Adachi (cited in Wadden, 1992), scholarship is thought of as expertise on a narrowly defined subject, which is associated with the intelligentsia. This is why teachers in the Japanese academic world spend a great deal of time on their specialties. Teachers may tend to think of their lectures as less important than their research and to consider class teaching as less important still:

This “teacher as scholar” perspective leads many Japanese professors to consider teaching the least important of their activities, and their classes can be dismal (p. 162).

However, the state of English education in Japan calls for teachers themselves to change their methods and to learn about cooperative working. As teachers’ behaviour influences teaching and learning in the classrooms, they will need to change their behaviour first, before the students’ behaviour can change and before they can be motivated to learn more.

APPENDIX ONE

Interview Questions for Teachers

Date:

Female:

Male:

Name:

I. General questions

II. Pedagogical questions

9. Do you speak English when you teach? (Marked with an X)

Never Sometimes Often Always

10. What kind of teaching methodology do you use?
a) _____
b) Why do you use it?

11. What do you do when learners do not understand your questions in class?

12. What do you do when learners do not understand the activities?

13. Do you use a textbook? Yes No
a) If yes, what textbook do you use?
b) What do you think of this text?

14. How do you translate English into Japanese?
a) In summary only b) Sentence by sentence c) Word for word

15. What do you do when learners do not understand the context of the text?

16. Did you deviate from your lesson plan today? Yes No

17. If "Yes", why did you deviate from it?

III. Questions about cross-cultural differences

18. Did you have any difficulties teaching English today? Yes No
a) If yes, why?
b) How did you cope with your difficulties?

19. How did you help students who didn't understand your questions?

20. How did you assist students who didn't understand their tasks?

21. What did you do with students who didn't participate?
22. How did you control power conflicts in group or pair-work when the students were doing the tasks?
23. While students were doing their tasks in groups or pairs, what were you doing?
24. If some of the students had differences of opinion or different ideas or answers, how did you guide them?

Optional questions were added after class observation.

APPENDIX TWO

Interview Questions for Students

Date:

Female:

Male:

Name:

I. General questions

1. How long have you been learning English?
2. Do you like learning English? Yes No
3. How did you do in your final high school assessment in English from 1, lowest, to 5, highest?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4 e) 5
4. What kinds of language tests have you taken?
a) STEP: Which grade did you reach? 1st Pre 1st 2nd Pre 2nd 3rd
When did you take this test?
b) TOEFL: What were your scores and when did you take the tests?
c) Other: What were your scores and when did you take the tests?
5. Why are you learning English?
6. How do you prefer to study? a) by myself b) in a pair c) in a group
7. Have you been abroad? Yes No
a) If yes, where have you been?
b) How long were you there?
c) Did your stay in _____ help you to understand more English? Yes No
d) Did your stay in _____ help you to speak more English? Yes No

II. Questions about Classroom Interaction

8. Did you enjoy today's lesson? Yes No
9. Did you speak English during the class? Yes No
How much? a) None b) very little c) a little d) quite a lot e) a lot
10. Did you ask your teacher questions? Yes No
If yes, a) What kinds of questions did you ask?
b) How did your teacher help you?
If no, a) What caused you not to ask your teacher questions?
11. Did you talk with your classmates in English in class?
If yes, a) What did you talk about in today's lesson?
b) How did your classmates help you?
If no, a) What caused you not to talk with your classmates?
12. What did you do during class?
13. Why?

III. Questions about Cross-cultural Difference

14. What kinds of problems did you have today in your group _____ or in class _____?
a) How did you solve your problems?
15. Did you have any difficulties in speaking to your English teacher? Yes No
a) If yes, what difficulties did you have?
b) How did you manage to solve your difficulties?

Optional questions were added after class observation.

APPENDIX THREE

INVESTIGATING CLASSROOM DYNAMICS IN JAPANESE EFL CLASSROOMS

Dear English Teacher,

I am a part-time PhD student at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. My supervisor is Dr Jeannette Littlemore. As I am a member of JACET, LET and JALT, I got your name and address from the membership lists of these organisations.

My research has two aims: first, through its findings, I want to enhance language teaching and learning for teachers and students of English in Japan, because English has become an international language. The English language does not belong to any particular culture, but to many. Globalisation influences the teaching of English, because many English classes in Japan now contain students who have returned from other countries or have come to Japan from foreign countries. Second, I want to suggest some possible strategies for managing clashes in the classroom and promoting language teaching and learning for those engaged in the study of English.

No finding will be published which could identify any individual participant. Your name will not be used in my records. Access to data is restricted to myself and my supervisor.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. The contact addresses are as follows:

Yasuyo Matsumoto: [Tel. & Fax]

[E-mail:]

[Address:]

I would be extremely grateful if you would complete this questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

Yasuyo Matsumoto
PhD by Research
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
The United Kingdom

1. Please indicate your gender by ticking ✓ the appropriate box.

Female 女 Male 男

Please write where you (whether a Japanese or a foreign student) are from and show your nationality by ticking ✓ the appropriate box.

Nationality 国籍: Japanese, 日本人 Brazilian, ブラジル人 Korean, 韓国人

Chinese, 中国人 Filipino, フィリピン人 Other その他 : _____

1. Please indicate your gender by ticking ✓ the appropriate box.

Female 女 Male 男

2. What is the highest degree you hold? 学歴について Please tick ✓ the appropriate box and give the degree major or specialty. あなたの最高学位を選び、明記してください。

- Bachelor's degree in 学士号 _____
 Master's degree in 修士号 _____
 Doctorate in 博士号 _____

3. What is your nationality? 国籍について Please write your nationality below (for both Japanese English teachers and native speakers of English). あなたの国籍を書いてください。

Your nationality 国籍: _____

4. How many countries have you lived in and for how long did you live there before you became an English teacher in Japan? (This question is for both Japanese English teachers and native speakers of English.) 英語教員になる前に、どのくらい外国に住みましたか？国名とその年数を書いてください。

- 1) Country 国 _____ How long? 期間 _____ year (s)
2) Country 国 _____ How long? 期間 _____ year (s)
3) Country 国 _____ How long? 期間 _____ year (s)

5. How many complete academic years have you taught English in Japan since you became an English teacher? Please mark with a ✓ in the appropriate box. 日本で英語を教えてどのくらいになりますか？当てはまる項目を✓してください。

- in my 1st year: 1年目 2-3 years: 2年目から3年目 4-5 years: 4年目から5年目
 6-10 years: 6年目から10年目 11-15 years: 11年目から15年目 over 16 years:
16年目以上

6. Where do you teach English? あなたの職場について当てはまる項目を☑してください。 Please mark with a ✓ in the appropriate box.

- 2-year college: 短期大学 University: 大学 Other その他: _____

7. When you teach English university or college students, to what degree do you value A), B), C) and D) below? Please write a number from 1 to 5 as designated below.

- A) The students' culture 学生たちの文化: _____ B) Their people 学生たちの国の人々: _____
C) Your own culture あなたの文化: _____ D) Your people あなたの国の人々:
1. Very much: すごく受け入れる 2. A great deal: わりに受け入れる 3. Little: 少し受け入れる
4. Very little: ほとんど受け入れない 5. Not at all: 全く受け入れない

8. How easily do you accept opinions, values and attitudes in the classroom which differ from yours? Please write a number from 1 to 5 on the underlining following each item. あなたと異なる考え方や、価値観や、態度を持つ学生をどの程度受け入れることができますか？1から5の受け入れる程度の番号を書いてください。

- 1) Different opinions: _____ 2) Different values: _____ 3) Different attitudes: _____

1. Easily: すぐに受け入れる。 2. Fairly easily: 少し考えてから受け入れる。 3. Not easily: 十分考えて受け入れる。 4. Very reluctantly: いやいや受け入れる。 5. Not at all: まったく受け入れない。

9-1) Have you had any of the following conflicts with your students? Below is a list of examples of conflict you may have had with your students whom you do not like or you do not get along with. If you do not find your example listed, please describe it in the final item. Please tick ✓ the right box to show your degree of tolerance. 英語の講義中に、あなたにとって、好ましくない学生とはどんな学生ですか。あなたはどの程度そういう学生を受け入れていますか？当てはまる項目を✓してください。

Very patient =VP すごく我慢する。 **Fairly patient =FP** わりと我慢する。 **Reluctantly patient =RP** しぶしぶ我慢する。 **Not patient at all=NA** 全く我慢しない。

Students who 学生:

- 1) state that they do not like English because it is not relevant to their life.

英語は実生活に不要なので、英語の勉強をしたくないという学生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

- 2) do not pay attention during class.

講義に集中しない学生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

- 3) are not willing even to try and communicate in English.

英語を話そうとしない学生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

- 4) arrive late in class

講義に遅刻してくる学生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

- 5) do not do their assignments but still expect to pass the course.

課題をしないのに、単位を欲しがる学生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

- 6) do not try to think for themselves, but get answers from classmates.

自分で答えを考えないで、隣りや周りの学生に答えを聞く学生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

- 7) keep silent during class.

講義中、黙っている学生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

- 8) talk often with their neighbours while the teacher lectures.

講義をしている最中に隣人としゃべる学生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

9) get too excited in the classroom.

講義中、すごくはしゃぐ学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する 全く我慢しない。

10) try to control other students.

他の学生たちをしきろうとする学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

11) Other:

その他:

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

9-2) Please choose from the above one or two examples which affected your teaching. Next, please state why you find these conflicts. Then describe how you cope with your conflicts.

次に、上記のような学生がいることで、講義がしにくくなつたことがありますか。1つか2つ講義がしにくくなつた例の番号を書いてください。また、あなたはどのようにその問題に対処したかについても書いてください。

The number of your conflict listed above which affected your teaching: _____

講義がしにくくなつた例の番号: _____

Why did you find it a conflict?

講義がしにくくなつた理由

Describe your coping strategy.

あなたの対処方法

1) The number of your conflict in the list above which affected your teaching: _____

講義がしにくくなつた例の番号: _____

Why did you find it a conflict?

講義がしにくくなつた理由

Describe your coping strategy.

あなたの対処方法

10-1) What serious disagreements, differences, frustrations, bad feeling have you had with your students? There follows a list of examples which you may feel are the causes of frustration or bad feeling with your students. Please tick ✓ each box to show your degree of tolerance. If you do not find your own situation covered, please describe it in the final item.

英語の講義中、学生に対して、すごく不愉快になった例、嫌になった例がありますか。それぞれどの程度我慢しているかに✓印をつけてください。もし当てはまらない場合は、どんな学生か具体的に書いてください。

Very patient =VP すごく我慢する。 **Fairly patient =FP** わりと我慢する。 **Reluctantly patient =RP** しぶしぶ我慢する。 **Not patient at all=NA** 全く我慢しない。

Students who:

1) want only to have a good time in class, not to learn seriously.

講義中、まじめに学習しないで、ただ楽しさだけを期待する学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

2) do not like your way of teaching.

先生の教え方を嫌う学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

3) do not understand what you say.

先生の言っていることを理解しない学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

4) do not mind being late for class.

遅刻することを気にしない学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

5) want credits, but not to work hard.

単位は欲しがるが、努力しない学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

6) do not accept your opinions.

先生の意見を受け入れない学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

7) try to monopolize your attention.

先生の注意を引きつけ、独占しようとする学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

8) want to be the centre of attention.

みんなの中心にいたい学生

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

9) Other: _____

その他: _____

VP FP RP NA

すごく我慢する。 わりと我慢する。 しぶしぶ我慢する。 全く我慢しない。

10-2) Please choose one or two of the examples above which affected your teaching. Next, please state why you find them conflicts. Then describe how you cope with your conflicts.

次に、上記のような学生がいることで、講義がしにくくなったことがありますか。1つか2つ講義がしにくくなった例の番号を書いてください。また、あなたはどのようにその問題に対処したかについても書いてください。

1) The number of your conflict listed above which affected your teaching: _____

講義がしにくくなった例の番号: _____

Why did you find it a conflict?

講義がしにくくなった理由

Describe your coping strategy.

あなたの対処方法

2) The number of your conflict in the list above which affected your teaching: _____

講義がしにくくなった例の番号: _____

Why did you find it a conflict?

講義がしにくくなった理由

Describe your coping strategy.

あなたの対処方法

Thank you very much for your participation! ご協力ありがとうございました！

Yasuyo Matsumoto 松本恭代

APPENDIX FOUR

INVESTIGATING CLASSROOM DYNAMICS IN JAPANESE EFL CLASSROOMS

Dear Learner of English,

I am a graduate student at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom and my supervisor is Dr. Jeannette Littlemore.

I am trying to find out two things. First, in every English classroom, the students are confronted with different opinions, cultures, attitudes from the students and the teachers. I would like to know how far you accept these differences and how you cope with the problems you may have with your classmates and English teachers in these classes. I call this your degree of tolerance. Second, on the basis of the information which you give, I want to improve teaching methods in Japan.

These days, due to technological developments such as the Internet, television, movies and bilingual news broadcasts, you can catch up with much that is going on in the world. Many people can easily contact different cultures by means of these technological developments. Like you, millions of students all round the world who have different cultures, opinions, and attitudes, are learning English as an international language. English does not belong to Western countries any more, but to many nations. Teachers also bring their cultures, opinions and attitudes, which are different from yours. You and your teachers, because of your individual values, may experience frustration, bad feeling, disappointment, conflict and hostility during English classes. I am attaching a questionnaire to this letter in the hope you will use it to tell me about your own experiences.

I promise that nobody, except my supervisor and me, will have access to your data, and that your answers will be anonymous. Please put your questionnaire into the envelope after you finish writing the answers. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask me. I will try to explain as simply as possible. My contact addresses are below.

1. [My E-mail address:]
2. [My telephone and fax numbers:]
3. [My address:]

Thank you very much for your participation and your frankness. I hope your information will contribute to improving English teaching methods in Japan.

Yasuyo Matsumoto
PhD course by research
University of Birmingham
The United Kingdom

学生の皆さんへお願い (Japanese translations of the questions to Japanese university students)

私はイギリスのバーミンガム大学大学院生で、私の博士論文指導教官はジャネット・リトルモア博士です。

私の研究課題は2つあります。一つ目は教室で英語の勉強をしている時に起こるさまざまな気まずい思い、誤解、いやなクラスメートとのかかわり、嫌いな英語の先生とのやり取り、困ったことなどをどのように受け止めているか、どのくらい自分と違うものを受け入れているかを研究し、次に、これらのことがあなたの英語の学習にどのような影響を与えていているかを調査し、みなさんがもっとスムーズに英語の学習ができる方法を見つけることです。

現在はいろいろな技術が進歩しています。たとえば、インターネット、テレビ、映画などがあり、これらの技術革新を利用して、世界の情報をすばやくキャッチできるのです。世界ではあなたのような学生達が英語を国際語として勉強しています。異なる文化や考え方を持つ学生たちが一つの言語（英語）を勉強しています。教室内でも異なる文化、考え方や態度を持つクラスメートが一つの教室で英語を勉強しています。英語の先生もさまざまな考え方や文化、態度を持ちながら、教室で英語を教えています。お互いにいやなこと、気まずい思い、いろいろを経験しながら、英語を勉強していると思います。ぜひ、そのことを率直に書いてください。

あなたの名前や個人的なことの秘密は厳守され、私の指導教官と私だけがここに書かれたことを読むことが出来ます。回答後は封筒にアンケート用紙を入れてください。もし、質問や内容がわからないところがあれば、遠慮なく質問してください。できる限りわかりやすくお答えしたいと思います。

私の連絡先は下記のところです。

1. 電子メール : []

もし、よければあなたのメールアドレスを教えてください。

あなたのメールアドレス : _____

2. 電話とファックス : []

3. 手紙のあて先 : []

皆さんのご協力と率直なご意見をありがとうございます。英語学習に役立つ教授法の発展に貢献できることを願っています。

イギリス、バーミンガム大学
博士課程大学院生 松本恭代

1. Please indicate your gender by ticking ✓ the appropriate box. あなたの性別に☑をつけてください。

Female 女 Male 男

2. Please write where you (whether a Japanese or a foreign student) are from and show your nationality by ticking ✓ the appropriate box. あなた(日本人学生または外国人学生)の国籍に印をつけ、出身地を書いてください。もし当てはまらない場合は書いてください。

Nationality 国籍: Japanese, 日本人 Brazilian, ブラジル人 Korean, 韓国人

Chinese, 中国人 Filipino, フィリピン人 Other, その他 : _____

Prefecture (if from Japan) もし、あなたが日本人ならば県名を書いてください。: _____

3. How long have you (whether Japanese or a foreign student) lived in Japan? Please tick ✓ the appropriate box. あなた(日本人学生または外国人学生)はどのくらい日本に住んで(滞在して)いますか? 当てはまる年数を選び、印をつけてください。

- Less than one year, 1 年未満 from 1 to 2 years, 1 年から 2 年未満
 from 2 to 3 years 2 年から 3 年未満 from 3 to 5 years 3 年から 5 年未満
 from 5 to 10 years 5 年から 10 年未満 from 10 to 15 years 10 年から 15 年未満
 from 15 to 20 years 15 年から 20 年未満 over 20 years 20 年以上

4. What educational institution are you enrolled in? Please tick ✓ the appropriate box. Next, please write your grade and department. あなたの大学（短大）に✓印をつけ、また学年、所属学部を書いてください。

University 大学 2-year college 短期大学

Your grade 学年: _____ Your department 所属学部: _____

5. Below is a list of examples of conflicts you may have had with your classmates whom you do not like or you do not get along with. If you do not find your example listed, please describe it in the final item. Please tick ✓ the right box to show your degree of tolerance. 英語の講義を受けている時に、あなたにとって、いやなクラスメートの例のリストがあります。それぞれどの程度我慢しているか✓し、もし当てはまらない場合はその例を書いてください。

Very patient =VP すごく我慢する。 / Fairly patient =FP わりと我慢する

/ Reluctantly patient =RP しぶしぶ我慢する / Not patient at all=NA 全く我慢しない

Classmates who:

- 1) do not listen to other people's opinions.

人の話を聞かないクラスメート

VP FP RP NA

- 2) contradict other people's opinions.

人の話をまず否定するクラスメート

VP FP RP NA

- 3) are over-excited when the teacher pays attention to them.

先生がそばにいるとやたらはりきるクラスメート

VP FP RP NA

- 4) laugh at someone else's failure, for example, giving a wrong answer, being unable to answer...

他人の失敗や答えられない人を笑うクラスメート

VP FP RP NA

- 5) do not express their opinions.

自分の意見を言わないクラスメート

VP FP RP NA

- 6) become too excited during class.

ふざけるクラスメート

VP FP RP NA

- 7) show different attitudes to a Japanese English teacher and a teacher who is a native speaker of English.

日本人の英語の先生の講義中と外人講師の講義中で態度がちがうクラスメート

VP FP RP NA

8) are slow to return their dictionaries in class.

借りた教科書、辞書などをすぐに返さないクラスメート

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

9) do not find answers for themselves, but depend on someone else to tell them.

自分で考えないで、人にはばかり頼るクラスメート

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

10) only pretend to participate in group work.

グループ活動に参加している振りをするクラスメート

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

11) work by themselves, not in pairs or groups.

2人組みやグループで課題を自分一人でやってしまうクラスメート

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

12) Other その他 : _____

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

5-2) Can you describe one or two examples of conflict you have had with your classmates from the list above? Did it affect your progress in English? What is your strategy for coping with conflict or argument in the classroom? 次に、上記の例がその後の学習の妨げになりましたか？1つか2つ学習の妨げになった例の番号を書いてください。また、あなたはどのようにその例に対処したか書いてください。

1) The number of your example 学習の妨げになった例の番号 : _____

Your coping strategy あなたの対処方法:

2) The number of your example 学習の妨げになった例の番号 : _____.

Your coping strategy あなたの対処方法:

6. There follows a list of examples of what you may feel are causes of the frustration or bad feeling which you have had with your English teachers. If you do not find your own situation covered, please describe it in the final item. Please tick ✓ the right box to show your degree of tolerance. 英語の講義中、あなたの英語の先生（達）に対してあなたが不愉快になった例、嫌になった例がありますか。それぞれどの程度我慢しているかに✓印をつけてください。もし当てはまらない場合はその例を書いてください。

Very patient =VP すごく我慢する / Fairly patient =FP わりと我慢する

Reluctantly patient =RP しぶしぶ我慢する / Not patient at all=NA 全く我慢しない

English teachers who いやな英語の先生の例 :

1) do not answer students' questions.

質問に答えない先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RF	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

2) look down on students who cannot answer.

答えられない学生を軽視する先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

3) lecture all the time.

自分が夢中で講義する先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

4) lack academic knowledge.

専門知識を十分持っていない先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

5) take no account of the students' language level.

学生の能力を無視する先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

6) are proud of their language proficiency.

英語ができるといい気になっている先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

7) are proud of their study abroad and experience.

留学経験を自慢する先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

8) have poor pronunciation.

発音の下手な先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

9) cannot communicate with foreigners in English.

英語で会話ができない先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

10) do not teach well or do not know how to teach well.

授業の仕方が下手な先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

11) invite questions, but are not happy to answer them.

質問をしていいと言いつながら、質問すると機嫌が悪くなる先生

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

12) Other その他 :

<input type="checkbox"/> VP	<input type="checkbox"/> FP	<input type="checkbox"/> RP	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

6-2) Did any of these affect your progress in English or not? Please state why you find these conflicts and describe how you cope with them. 次に、上記例がその後の学習の妨げになりましたか。1つか2つ学習の妨げになった例の番号を書いてください。また、あなたはどのようにその問題に対処したかについても書いてください。

1) **The number of your conflict** 学習の妨げになった例の番号 : _____

Your coping strategy あなたの対処方法 :

2) **The number of your conflict** 学習の妨げになった例の番号 : _____

Your coping strategy あなたの対処方法 :

Thank you for your participation! ご協力ありがとうございました！ Yasuyo Matsumoto 松本恭代

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ⁱ Please contact me at (insert email address) if you would like to see the full data set.