

The Relationship between Integrated Teaching and Writing Skill

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Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between integrated teaching method and students' writing skill. Integrated teaching is "(teaching) the practical application of listening, reading, speaking, and other abilities that are required in communication." The participants of this research are high school students who currently belong to an English class where the teacher teaches English with the use of integrated teaching method. Two tests are assigned to the participants; one is grammar test which concentrates on subject-verb agreement, and the other is writing test. The result was that there was no statistically significance found between the score of the two tests; whether or not students do well on the grammar test, they tend to write correctly on Test B. Therefore, it can be concluded that the class with using integrated teaching method can be one of the factors that improves students' writing ability.

Keywords

Communicative competence, integrated approach, receptive and productive skills.

Introduction

In Japanese high schools, the purpose of English teaching is, according to Course of Study, "through the use of English, to deepen the students' understanding language and culture, to develop their attitudes toward communication," and with much emphasis on the following factor which is "to strengthen the pragmatic communicative skills in order to comprehend the information or thoughts of others and express the students' personal thoughts." (Course of Study of English in Japanese High School, 2002). However, as Kobayashi and many other researchers point out "students have not had many opportunities to practice writing good paragraphs in English," (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2002; Gorsuch, 1998) which entails the tendency that "Japanese report having problems writing academic papers." (Kohls, 1999; Spack, 1997). The reason why I bring up this particular writing skill is that writing is considered as a part of communication (Canale & Swain, 1980) and I

personally faced high school students' current situation at prep school. That is, I found that Japanese high school students seem to have difficulties in actually using English even if they have some grammatical knowledge, despite the fact that the purpose of English teaching in Japan is "to strengthen the pragmatic communicative skills." Therefore, utilizing Canale's and Swain's definition of communication, this paper investigates whether there is any statistical relationship between integrated approach and writing skill in terms of transferring the students' knowledge to the pragmatic use, particularly writing.

1 Previous Studies

1.1 Communicative competence

According to Canale and Swain, communicative competence, or the ability to communicate, can be categorized as follows; grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and communication strategies, or strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Grammatical competence can be judged by, for example, "the levels of grammatical accuracy that are required in oral and written communication," and that of strategic competence is determined by "the compensatory communication strategies to be used when there is breakdown in one of the other competence" (Canale & Swain, 1980). For this particular research, the main focus is put on grammatical competence.

1.2 Integrated approach

The detailed information of integrated teaching, or integrated approach, is given by Tasaki and Dennis in *A Guide to English Language Teaching Terminology*. There are several meanings for this term; for instance, integrated approach is the one which is "to improve students' reading skill by integrating top-down processing and bottom-up processing," or that to "create the situation to use the target language by having students join a training camp and etc." (Tasaki, 1995; Dennis, 1986). As the literal meaning of the word "integrate" implies, integrated teaching/approach is to teach something with unifying the matters

instead of teaching the same thing “separately.” Thus, for this paper the definition of integrated teaching is determined as “(teaching) the practical application of listening, reading, speaking, and other abilities that are required in communication” (A Guide to English Language Teaching Terminology, 1999, pp.147).

1.3 Types of skills

For communication in the section above, four skills of English are required to make it successfully be carried out: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. The former two skills are called productive skill, which is “the term used for speaking and writing, skills where students actually have to produce language themselves,” and the latter two are called receptive skill, which is “the term used for listening and reading, skills where meaning is extracted from the discourse” (Harmer, 2007). Focusing on writing (productive) skill, further comments were made such as Pike’s “grammar ability is known to highly correlate with writing ability” (Pike, 1976), and “writing is a highly effective means for converting receptive ability into productive ability” (Corson, 1997; Lauer, 1998). As shown in the previous section 1.1, grammatical competence is related with writing communication, which is the meaningful way of transferring receptive skill to productive one. Thus, it can be mentioned that it’s possible to determine whether a person is equipped with one of the factors of communicative competence by having him/her take a grammatical test and a writing test.

2 Methodology

2.1 Purpose

As I have already mentioned partially in the “Introduction” section, I doubt that Japanese high school students are able to effectively apply their English grammatical knowledge into English writing. If they are truly expected to “strengthen the pragmatic communicative skills,” they should be given the opportunities not only to learn the grammatical matters but also to practice or utilize that knowledge because real communication cannot be done by only receptive skills; but in reality I feel that they do not have enough of such chances. For this reason, my research focuses on integrated teaching method as the tool of having the students more chances of using English in terms of all the four English skills so as for them to be able to carry out the indubitable communication.

With this motivation lying behind, this particular research, I tried to find the relationship between the integrated teaching and students’ writing ability. Furthermore, I’d also like to detect

1) how well students who are taught with using integrated approach can apply their grammatical knowledge, which is on subject-verb agreement, into their writing and 2) how they are related.

2.2 Method

2.2.1 Participants

Participants of this research are 26 high school senior male students, who are all 17 to 18 years old. Their English class deals with listening, discussion, reading, and writing.

2.2.2 Tests

Two tests are assigned to the participants; one of which is on grammar (Test A), and the other is on writing (Test B). Referred from *English Grammar in Use* by Murphy, R, Test A has 31 grammatical questions of subject-verb agreement, which include verb tenses and auxiliary verbs. In addition to Test A, the participants are assigned Test B for which they write on some topics. In this research, I compare the scores of Test A with how well they write sentences considering subject-verb agreement in the percentage of the numbers of errors they made on the subject-verb agreement out of the numbers of clauses they wrote on Test B.

3 Analysis and Findings

Analyzing the result for Test A, I found that the mean score was relatively lower than I expected; the mean was 19.8(61.3%) with 28 at max and 11 minimum. As opposed, the average percentage of sentences the participants correctly wrote in terms of subject-verb agreement was 94% with 85% minimum. In order to find the relationship with these two tests, I calculated the correlation of them, whose result is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

Table 1: Correlation of Test A with Test B

	Test A	Test B
Test A: total	1	
Test B(correct %)	-0.17483999	1

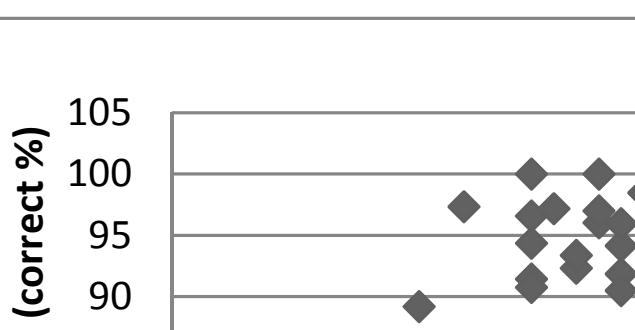


Figure 1: the relationship between scores of Test A and the percentage of the participants’

As shown in Table 1, the correlation coefficient is -0.174, which shows that the two tests are not highly related. In addition, Figure 1 is the scatter diagram of the results of the two tests and it shows that all but 2 participants were able to write correctly in terms of subject-verb agreement. However, as it is already mentioned, it does not mean that the lower score a participant gets on Test A, the lower percentage he writes correctly on Test B; one of the two participants who got 86% on Test B scored relatively high: 23 out of 31.

4 Conclusion and future plan

There was not statistically significant relationship found between how well students score on a grammar test, which for this research is subject-verb agreement, and how correctly they apply the knowledge when writing English. However from this result, what can be found interesting is that high school senior students are able to use knowledge of subject-verb agreement on English writing no matter how well they do on a grammar test. Furthermore, in this particular research I could not compare the result of students who are taught with integrated approach with those who are taught with other teaching method.

Considering these facts, my plan for the future research according to this topic would be such as finding the difference between the class taught normally and that taught with using integrated approach. In addition, I would seek for the relationship of integrated teaching method with, not only grammatical writing ability, but also other skills such as listening, speaking, and writing.

5 References and appendices

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5.2 Appendices

Appendix A. Test A: grammar test.

1-1. “_____this week?” “No, she’s on vacation.”
 A. Is Sarah working B. Does Sara work
 C. Does work Sarah

1-2. I don’t understand this sentence.
 What_____?
 A. does mean this word
 B. does this word mean
 C. means this word

1-3. In the summer, John_____tennis once or twice a week.
 A. is playing usually B. is usually playing
 C. usually plays D. plays usually

1-4. How_____now? Better than before?
 A. you are feeling B. do you feel
 C. are you feeling

1-5. It was a boring weekend._____anything.
 A. I didn’t B. I don’t do C. I didn’t do

1-6. Matt_____his hand while he was cooking dinner.
 A. burned B. was burning C. has burned

2-1. Kimberly isn’t here.____out.
 A. She goes B. She went C. She’s gone

2-2. Everything is going well. We_____any problems so far.
 A. didn’t have B. don’t have C. haven’t had

2-3. Sarah has lost her passport again. It’s the second time this_____.
 A. has happened B. happens C. happened

2-4. You’re out of breath._____?
 A. Are you running B. Have you run
 C. Have you been running

2-5. Where’s the book I gave you? What with it?
 A. Have you done B. have you been doing
 C. are you doing

2-6. We’re good friends. We_____each other

since we were in high school.
 A. know B. have known C. have been
 knowing D. knew

2-7. Kelly has been working here _____.
 A. for six months B. since six months
 C. six months ago

2-8. It's been two years ____ Joe.
 A. that I don't see B. that I haven't seen
 C. since I didn't see D. since I last saw

2-9. What time ____ work yesterday?
 A. did you finish B. have you finished
 C. are you finished D. do you finish

2-10. The Chinese ____ printing.
 A. invented B. have invented
 C. had invented

2-11. John ____ in New York for ten years.
 Now he lives in Los Angeles.
 A. lived B. has lived
 C. has been living

2-12. The man sitting next to me on the plane
 was very nervous. He ____ before.
 A. hasn't flown B. didn't fly
 C. hadn't flown D. wasn't flying

2-13. ____ a car when they were
 living in Miami?
 A. Had they B. Did they have
 C. Were they having D. Have they had

2-14. I ____ TV a lot, but I don't
 anymore.
 A. was watching B. was used to watch
 C. used to watch

3-1. ____ tomorrow, so we can go
 somewhere.
 A. I shall not work B. I'm not working
 C. I won't work

3-2. That bag looks heavy. ____ you
 with it.
 A. I'm helping B. I help C. I'll help

3-3. I think the weather ____ be nice later.
 A. will B. shall C. is going to

3-4. "Anna is in the hospital." "Yes, I know.
 her tonight."
 A. I visit B. I'm going to visit C. I'll visit

3-5. We're late. The movie ____ by
 the time we get to the theater.
 A. will already start
 B. will be already started
 C. will already have started

3-6. Don't worry ____ late tonight.
 A. if I'm B. when I'm
 C. when I'll be D. if I'll be

6-1. We ____ by a loud noise during
 the night.
 A. woke up B. are woken up
 C. were woken up D. were waking up

6-2. There's somebody walking behind us. I
 think _____.
 A. we are following
 B. we are being followed
 C. we are followed
 D. we are being followed

6-3. "Where ____?" "In Los Angeles."
 A. were you born B. are you born
 C. have been born D. did you born

6-4. The train ____ arrive at 11:30, but it
 was an hour late.
 A. supposed to B. is supposed to
 C. was supposed to

6-5. Where ____? Which barber did you go
 to?
 A. did you cut your hair
 B. have you cut your hair
 C. did you have cut your hair
 D. did you have your hair cut

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