

# Problems and Solutions for Early English Education in Japan

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## 0. Introduction

Early English Education from the age of nursery schools, kinder gardens or elementary schools is now based on the compulsory education in Japan. In addition, the cram schools or private schools' education have been spread all over in Japan in fulfillment of their school curriculums. The writer would like to, thereupon, reconsider some problems in early English education, with a special reference to the learning outside schools. Based on her experience of several teaching English language at private English schools for children, she has found the following five problems in teaching the language:

1. Discrepancy of interest in English education between the learners and the parents,
2. A cast of doubt in teaching all in English,
3. A doubt in too many assignments under the education policy,
4. Reconsideration of the education service as the employee,
5. Say no to the rote-learning.

The writer's view covers the abovementioned problems in early English education only to draw a conclusion for the solutions. She hopes the present article may help the future English teachers awake for the possible problems.

## **1. Discrepancy of interest in English education between the learners and the parents.**

It is not always all the students in class that are fully willing to participate in the classroom. That is what the writer has discovered when she was teaching English for children. From her experience, one student really did not want to come to her English class. However, his mother has a good understanding of early English education, and she kept on taking him to the classroom even though he was crying all the time.

To the writer's honest, the interest in every child should be different among their circumstances. Some children like to play baseball, and the others may like to draw some pictures. Some parents, who are wise enough to overview their future necessity of learning and acquisition, let them do what they want.

The children who cried every time for my English lesson had suffered such a bad time, and strictly speaking it was a time loss for him. The more he like the subject, the more he obtains confidants. It was as though his English class made his interest in language worse. Therefore, the parents should respect their children's wills.

## **2. A cast of doubt in teaching all in English.**

Nowadays a lot of English private schools for children in Japan enforces teaching all in English in the classrooms. It sounds like providing natural circumstances of learning English; however, the students' understandings of the teachers' explanations are not always understood except those in the simple English classroom English.

The above mentioned classroom English expressions are exemplified as follows:

1. "Now listen!"
2. "Watch me!"
3. "Listen to me!"
4. "Good job!"

The above four examples are just a few of them. The expressions are all simple, otherwise they cannot understand the eloquent English expressions in general.

The writer, therefore, would consider it admissible to use the students' mother language if necessary.

### **3. A doubt in too many assignments under the education policy.**

As the writer has mentioned in the aforementioned section one, the students need to enjoy the class unless otherwise it is a time loss. She considers that giving too many assignments all the time may give them some stress. It even can lead to their feeling of 'dislikes' toward learning English language.

The home works or the class assignments are, however, all arranged by the school administrators to run for the schools. Therefore, the teachers have to give the designated assignments beyond their judgements.

In the present section, the writer would like to insist the necessity of flexible judgements if necessary. It is them who face to them on the first front. They should perceive all the feedbacks from the students. The school administrators should, therefore, trust their teachers more.

### **4. Reconsideration of the education service as employees.**

As an employee of the English private school in Japan, the writer could not feel but always apologizing to the administration staffs and the

students' parents. It is because the private schools run for a subsidiary business in adjacent to the schools that are government by the government or cities. It is 'education service'. The schools make profit out of the English education, nevertheless it should not be denied. What the writer was concerned about was that the teachers as their employee are obedient and always apologizing. They are wise enough to be inferior to the school bosses, administrators, or the students' parents, and therefore, most of them are treated in the way of as customer-service. The writer knows the feelings of the teachers.

### **5. Say no to the rote-learning.**

As the present writer has mentioned in the section one, the student' motivation and interest in learning English language comes first. Therefore, frankly speaking, the rote-learning of words and sentences are boring to the students. It is not effective to memorize everything as well. The meanings of words, simple sentences, and a conversation phrase should be mastered according to the occurrences of the expressions.

In other words, they should be learned depending on the contextual background. The meanings and the senses of the expressions, in fact, may vary according to the contexts.

The teachers and the administrators should, therefore, should prepare good teaching materials so that they can learn the usages of the words/ expressions on which circumstances they occur.

### **6. Final remarks.**

The present article has discussed the above mentioned five problems and the solutions in early English education at private/ cram schools in

Japan. She is sure that having the early-stage language education accelerates the acquisitions of the languages. It should be carried on, however, without stress of learning. She furthermore admits that the acquisition from early stage should bring them enough confident even in their adulthood. She, therefore, wishes further improvement of English language education from the earlier stage by considering the matters discussed in the present article.