

## [ 研究ノート ]

# A Study of an English Curriculum for Migrants in Australia and its possible Implications for English Education in Japanese Schools

Akihiko Takeda

### 1. Introduction

Although it has often been said that grammar inhibits learners from developing communicative English competence, English teachers and researchers know it is very conducive to proficiency in English. In particular, Japanese teachers of English know that students can not achieve sufficient ability in the four skills to deal with complicated or difficult sentence patterns in English without a certain knowledge of grammar. The writer believes that the problem lies in how to teach English structures and what linguistic items to teach. This paper discusses the curriculum employed to teach English to migrants in Australia in the hope that it may throw light on strategies for English education in Japan.

### 2. The Course of Study in Japan and the Certificate in Spoken and Written English in Australia

English teaching in Japanese schools has been based on the Course of Study. It is reviewed and reissued by roughly every ten years to keep pace with the changing of the society. It is the official guideline used in our school education.

Australia is ahead of Japan in communicative English teaching because it is a multi-racial nation. Migrants have to acquire a certain level of English there. A curriculum is a general statement of goals and outcomes, learning arrangements, evaluation and documentation relating to the management of programs within an educational situation.<sup>1</sup> The Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) in New South Wales has issued the Certificates , , and in Spoken and Written English (CSWE)<sup>2</sup>, since 1992 and this curriculum is now the most widely used. The contrastive study of the two frameworks mentioned above is worthwhile for

improving English teaching in Japan.

## **2.1 Overall Objectives in the Course of Study**

Japanese school students learn English as a foreign language, so one of the objectives is to deepen students' understanding of language and culture. Also, the focus of English teaching has recently shifted to the development of communication in English. Communication activities are now being emphasized in the Overall Objectives of the Course of Study.

### Course of Study: Overall Objectives

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#### Junior High School

To deepen students' understanding of languages and cultures through learning foreign languages, foster a positive attitude toward communication with foreign people, and develop the basis of practical communication skills in listening, speaking and other language acts.<sup>3</sup>

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#### Senior High School

To deepen students' understanding of languages and cultures through learning foreign languages, foster a positive attitude toward communication with foreign people, and develop the practical communication skills for understanding information given and intentions shown by others as well as for expressing their own thoughts and judgements.<sup>4</sup>

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## **2.2 Aims of Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE)**

A syllabus is an explicit and coherent plan for a course of study. The Certificate in Spoken and Written English includes a syllabus design. It specifies what is to be taught in any particular course of study. In this syllabus design, language is considered to have three layers as Figure 1 shows

**Figure. 1**

The Relationship of Three Layers

Discourse semantics (Texts)

Lexicogrammar (Words and structures)

Expression (Sounds or writing) <sup>5</sup>

When the clauses of a stretch of discourse are held together by the strands of meaning, they become a unified whole ie, they become a text. The meanings become words and structures. Then they are expressed by sounds and symbols. This concept is accepted by many language teaching researchers and instructors. Based on this underlying concept, Certificates – in Spoken and Written English provide a framework for learners of English to develop language and literacy skills required to understand further education and training, to seek and maintain employment, and to participate in the community

### **2. 3 Language Activities in the Course of Study and the Outcome Criteria in the CSWE**

In contrast to the learning setting in Australia, Japanese students learn English as a foreign language in school education. They do not know even the basics of English at the beginning of junior high schools. They learn English in a formal setting. The Course of Study for these students in formal school education is very different from the well-known syllabus for migrant English education in Australia. Language activities in the Course of Study are prescribed in a very ambiguous way as shown below. In a sense, Japanese teachers have a lot of room to do whatever they would like to do.

#### **An Example of Language Activities in the Course of Study**

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##### **(1) Language Activities**

The following language activities should be conducted in order to develop the

students' abilities to understand English and express themselves in the language throughout the three years of instruction.

#### A. Listening

The following skills are to be emphasized:

- (a) To understand spoken English, learning the basic characteristics of stress, intonation, and pauses
- (b) To grasp the main contents or specific ideas of speech which are spoken or read out with natural speed and intonation.

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The outcome-oriented syllabus design of the CSWE focusses on what an individual can do after taking classes. It explicitly states criteria for assessment. These criteria are objectives for learners to achieve. The writer is going to make clear what items of lexicogrammar, and in particular, structures, are taught and at which stage they are taught.

### 3. Scheme of the CSWE and its Grammatical Items at Each Level

The curriculum for Adult English learners prescribed by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSW AMES) is divided into the following courses by learning stages:

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Pre-Certificate I (200 hours)

Module A/Module B

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Beginner Stage:

Certificate I in Spoken and Written English (300 hours)

Modules: Two (2) Compulsory Modules

Three (3) Elective Modules (Selected from 9)

Post Beginner Stage:

Certificate in Spoken and Written English (300 hours)

Modules: Two (2) Compulsory Modules

Three (3) Elective Modules (Selected from 10)

Intermediate Stage:

Certificate in Spoken and Written English (300 hours)

Modules: Two (2) Compulsory Modules

Three (3) Elective Modules (Selected from 13)

Advanced Stage:

Certificate in Spoken and Written English – Further Education (300 hours)

Modules: Four (4) Elective Modules (Select from 6)

Certificate in Spoken and Written English – Jobseeking (300 hours)

Modules: Four (4) Elective Modules (Select from 7)

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The courses of this curriculum are divided into four parts, but before Certificate I, a course in preliminary spoken and written English is placed. Each course is allotted a certain amount of time to complete. The nominal duration tells us how much time it will take to acquire English proficiency. Compared to the nominal duration listed in Table 1, the number of English class hours per year in the Japanese Course of Study is incomparably small.

The CSWE has compulsory courses and elective courses. What characterizes this curriculum is that it gives a variety of choices to learners in accordance with their needs.

### **3.1 Grammatical Items in the CSWE**

Module is a unit of a course of study. Module A is a course for beginner strategies for learning and Module B for beginner communication skills. Both are compulsory, but grammatical items are not required. This suggests that learners should start with one-word responses at the beginning. After Module A and B, they take 3 out of 9 modules. Some grammatical items are prescribed in each module, mainly in modules of speaking and writing. First, one-clause questions and one-clause statements. Next, conjunctions to join clauses and modifiers such as adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases. Learners learn the present tense and then the past tense. However, no description is made about regular and irregular verbs, although Japanese learners learn regular verbs first and irregular

verbs next. Migrant learners in Australia also learn imperative clauses. They are expected to be able to use personal pronouns, too. They do not learn exclamatory sentences, which Japanese students learn in junior high school, at the beginner's stage.

What features most at this stage is that a simple sentence, which is called a clause, is first learned and some words are added to it by conjunctions, adverbs and adjectives. This way of studying is similar to expansion drills in Palmer's pattern practice.

**Main Grammatical Items in the CSWE**

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to use one-clause questions or statements	(Speaking)
to ask or respond to at least 1 question	(Speaking)
to use at least 1 conjunction to join clauses	(Speaking, Writing)
to construct at least 1 noun group with an adjective, eg <i>a new flat, large eyes</i>	(Speaking, Writing)
to use at least 3 forms of <i>to be</i> and/or <i>to have</i> correctly	(Speaking)
to use at least 1 personal pronoun	(Speaking, Writing)
to structure imperative clauses correctly	(Speaking)
to indicate time and location by using adverbs and/or prepositional phrases	(Writing)
to use at least three different past tense verbs	(Writing)

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\* Words in parenthesis show the content of the Module.

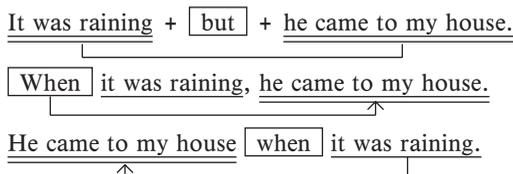
**3.2 Grammatical Items in the CSWE**

The CSWE is the syllabus design of the post beginner stage. One of the features is that the grammatical items which have been prescribed for the CSWE I appear in this stage again. As Krashen says that the optimal input is not grammatically sequenced<sup>7</sup>, they are repeated when needed in various situations. Secondly, learners are expected to be able to write a paragraph at this stage. In writing a paragraph, they are told to use at least some cohesive devices like discourse

markers; *first, then, and finally*, and attitudinal lexis; *most fascinating, delicious, and strange*.

What is different from Japanese ways of teaching is that the CSWE requests learners to use two types of conjunctions, coordinate conjunctions and subordinate conjunctions at the same time. As Figure 2 shows, a coordinate conjunction, which is placed between two connected things, is easy to understand. However, a subordinate conjunction is difficult to understand because it is put at the beginning part of the subordinate clause. It is really difficult to understand or grasp because this kind of structure does not exist in Japanese.

**Figure 2**



### Main Grammatical Items in the CSWE

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- to recognize a conditional clause in a set of instruction (Reading, Speaking)
- to construct at least 3 noun groups incorporating adjectives and nouns, eg *a good weekend, good food* (Writing)
- to use at least 5 different past-tense verbs (Writing, Speaking)
- to construct at least 2 sentences of 2 or more clauses using at least 2 different conjunctions, eg *and, but, because, so, when* (Writing)
- to use appropriate tense forms (Writing)
- to use time/location markers, eg *first, then, finally, yesterday, in, at* (Writing)
- to write at least 2 paragraphs (Writing)
- to use simple references appropriately, eg pronouns, articles (Writing)
- to use at least 3 cohesive devices appropriately, eg discourse markers,

### 3.3 Grammatical Items in the CSWE

The CSWE III, which is the curriculum of the intermediate stage, requires learners to acquire grammatical items of a more advanced level. Take ' writing ' at this stage for instance. Learning outcomes of the intermediate level are: to be able to write an informal letter and a formal letter, to be able to write a discussion, an exposition, and a narrative text. Then, learners at this stage have to use grammatical structures to express appropriate formality. To be more concrete, grammatical structures such as contractions, modal verbs, imperatives, interrogatives, and declaratives are expected to be used appropriately. Also, linking devices such as *in addition*, and *in conclusion* and formulaic expressions to convey cause-and-effect relationships such as *lead to*, and *contributes to...* should be learned. They need to read analytically at this stage because reading materials are difficult and complicated. Grammatical items are found in the Module for reading for the first time at this stage.

#### Main Grammatical Items in the CSWE

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to respond appropriately to grammatical structures signaling required action, eg imperatives, modal verbs, dependent clauses of condition or time

(Reading)

to use appropriate cohesive devices, eg discourse makers, conjunctions

(Writing)

to use references to track people and things

(Writing)

to use grammatical structures appropriate to topics and level of formality, eg contractions, modal verbs, imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives

(Writing, Speaking)

to use grammatical structures appropriate to setting and register

(Writing, Speaking)

to respond to temporal markers in instructions, eg *before, next, while*

	(Speaking)
to use appropriate conjunctive links, eg to compare and contrast	
	(Writing)
to use reference to signal and retrieve information as required, eg <i>this means..., this factor..., the previous...</i>	(Speaking)
to introduce and sequence argument using linking devices, eg <i>first, in addition, in conclusion</i>	(Writing)
to use formulaic expressions to convey cause-effect relationships, eg <i>leads to, contributes to, the consequence of</i>	(Writing)
to link ideas cohesively, using, for example, conjunctions and references	(Writing)

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### 3.4 Grammar Items in the CSWE

The CSWE , which is at the advanced stage, consists of two parts: one curriculum for further education and one for jobseeking. The former prescribes the criteria for the advanced grammar necessary for further education and the latter for jobseeking. What is expected of advanced learners here is to write cohesive and logically sequenced paragraphs at a required level of technicality, formality and abstraction. They are expected to use appropriate conjunctions, references and discourse markers which they have already learned at previous stages. So, the same items which have already been learned at a previous stage appear repeatedly in different modules. The point which deserves our attention is that this stage requests that learners should use linguistic structures appropriate to setting and register.

#### Main Grammatical Items in the CSWE : Further Education

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to use appropriate register, eg level of technicality, level of formality	(Writing, Speaking)
to use appropriate and correct grammatical features, eg verb groups, tenses, circumstances, other discourse markers	(Writing)

to link main ideas cohesively and logically by using appropriate conjunctions and references	(Speaking)
to use grammatical structures that reflect the required level of formality and abstraction	(Speaking)
to link ideas cohesively by using appropriate references and conjunctions, eg addition, time, cause, consequence, conditions and comparison	(Speaking)
to construct cohesive paragraphs, using conjunctive links, references, paragraphs and sentence themes to organize the flow of information	
to identify the dominant grammatical features in a range of texts, eg imperative structure in procedural texts, present tense in explanations	(Reading)
to use appropriate grammar to reflect a range of academic contexts	(Speaking)
to use appropriate and accurate grammatical structures at the required level of technicality, formality and abstraction	(Writing)

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In the module of ' Jobseeking ', connectives are also made much of. ' To use grammatical structures appropriate to setting and register, eg imperative verb forms and modal markers ' is prescribed as one of the criteria. Another item worthy of special mention is ' to use conventional contracted structures accurately to present information at the required level of formality and detail ' . It tells us that these are very important items in the work place.

#### Main Grammatical Items in the CSWE : Jobseeking

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to use grammatical structures appropriate to context and register, eg level of formality	(Speaking)
to link ideas cohesively by using appropriate reference and conjunction, eg addition, time, cause, consequence, condition and comparison	(Speaking)
to use appropriate and accurate grammatical structures including conven-	

tional contractions and abbreviations	(Writing)
to link ideas cohesively and logically by using appropriate reference and conjunction	(Writing)
to respond to questions by structuring information with appropriate discourse markers	(Speaking)
to use appropriate discourse markers, eg <i>the most important thing is ...</i>	(Speaking)
to use dependent clauses of time, purpose and cause, eg <i>if the machine jams, then ...</i>	(Speaking)
to use grammatical structures appropriate to setting and register, eg imperative verb forms and modal markers	(Speaking)
to link main ideas using appropriate conjunctions and reference	(Speaking)
to use conventional contracted structures accurately to present information at a required level of formality and detail	(Speaking)
to use ideas cohesively by using appropriate reference and explicit and implicit conjunctions	(Writing)

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#### 4. Discussion

Immigrants in Australia don't have to take all of the modules offered for this certificate. Those who have already achieved a certain level of English start to take modules in the middle of the curriculum. So, the same grammatical items are set at different modules at different stages.

One of the biggest differences between the CSWE and the Course of Study in Japan is that the former curriculum focuses on discourse level, the latter on sentence level. So, in the CSWE, discourse markers and references are set as criteria of assessment in the CSWE, while grammatical items of sentences are mainly set in the Course of Study in Japanese schools.

These linguistic items are mainly dealt with in the field of Speaking and Writing. In the Course of Study in Japanese schools, basic grammatical items of sentence structure are taught in the subject of English in junior high schools but it

does not provide at what level and in what field they should be taught. They are provided to be taught in the field of Writing. On the contrary, the CSWE prescribes the objectives to be achieved at a module. It is described precisely as an 'outcome' of each module.

Japanese people have studied English using the Grammar- translation method for a long time. We used to parse English with the knowledge of English grammar. This learning style is maintained even now, so Japanese people are apt to analyze English grammatically. It is good to understand difficult English sentences analytically but when it comes to the development of communicative competence in English, it has some problems. However, in the CSWE, the focus is whether or not the learners can use the linguistic items in real communication. So, they don't spend time in explaining the concept of grammatical items and sentence structures.

## 5. Conclusion

When adult learners do not know the concepts of basic grammatical items and they do not understand the structure of sentences, they will find it difficult to internalize the English they have already learned. However, the problem is that too much time has been spent in teaching complicated and minute linguistic items.

In the Australian curriculum, English grammar for productive use is taught. It focuses on the discourse. It gives us some good ideas to develop communicative competence, but I wonder how Australian migrants acquire English structures.

We can not say which is better, but what the writer can say at least is that there are some ideas hidden in the Australian curriculum that can help develop student's communicative ability in Japanese school education.

## Notes

1. Susan Fees, *Text-based Syllabus Design*, New South Wales, National Center for English Language Teaching and Research, 2002, p.9.
2. New South Wales Department of Education and Training, *Certificate - in Spoken and Written English*, NSW Adult Migrant English Service, 2003.

3. Monbusho, *Chu-gakko Gakushu Shido Yoryo*, Monbusho, 1999.  
The English version of the current Course of Study is not issued. The English translation (3), (4) and (6) are extracted from the appendix of *Eigo-Kyoiku Gairon* (2000) written by Masao Takahashi.
4. Monbusho, *Koto-gakko Gakushu Shido Yoryo*, Monbusho, 2000.
5. Susan Fees, p. 7.
6. *Chu-gakko Gakushu Shido Yoryo*, 1999.
7. Stephen D. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford, Pergamon, 1982, p. 68.