

SPEAKEASY

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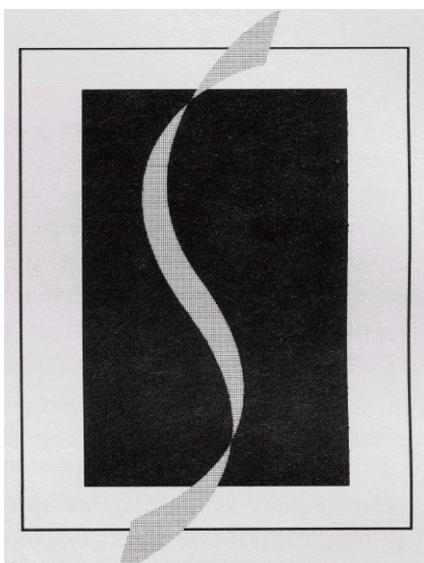
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JALT GUNMA

The Japan Association for Language Teaching

Gunma Chapter

PREFACE

It is my pleasure to commend another issue of Speakeasy to your attention. This is a great issue with three very good articles: *Playing Cards as a Vehicle for English Learning: A Case of the Jomo Karuta Cards* by Zenji Inamura, *Material Development: Custom made videos for your class* by Scott Berlin and *English Classes for College Students of the Health Sciences in Japan* by Alexander von Altenstadt.

It is our honor that Inamura-sensei wrote about his tremendous achievement of translating Jomo Karuta into English. Putting Karuta into English is not easy. It was only possible because of his professional expertise and sincere efforts. And the result is beautiful. Japanese teachers can study English with their students by playing it, using the tape if available. Native-speaker teachers, especially ELTs, can teach English with it and at the same time learn the local culture.

It was also our honor to have Scott Berlin at one of our monthly meetings. He was the first president of the Korean TESOL and is now teaching at a university in Japan. He showed us how to produce your own video materials. I have been trying to use video in my classes, but not very successful. One difficulty is to find a video which meets students' needs and interests. If you are able to make it on your own, the advantage is immeasurable.

Alexander von Altenstadt reported on his experiences at Gunma Prefectural College of Health Sciences. I was interested in his report because I used to teach in a similar school. I am sure his students appreciate his teaching of useful phrases and conversational skills. I also understand some of the questions he raised in the article: what kind of English do they need and how much can they attain? I had the same questions. Many people are now trying to answer them by developing various materials.

One of those materials is the one developed by Yoko Watanabe, honorable editor of Speakeasy. Her work, *Health Talk: English for Hands-on Nursing*, is another great work by a JALT-Gunma member.

Finally I'd like to thank the editors, Yoko and Alex, for their work. And I apologize to all that my tardiness has delayed the actual publication.

Co-president
Morijiro Shibayama

ARTICLES

Playing Cards as a Vehicle for English Learning: A Case of the Jomo Karuta Cards

Zenji Inamura

Gunma University of Social Welfare

History of the Jomo Karuta Cards

The Japanese version of the 57-year-old Jomo Karuta cards enjoys strong popularity among the people of Gunma, as a local culture which introduces Gunma's history, geography and products etc., and forms a part of the elementary school curriculum in the prefecture.

The original Japanese version of the Jomo Karuta cards was born in 1947 out of a campaign to cheer up children and offer them an interesting and educational game in the aftermath of World War II. They were terribly hungry for games as well as sweets. The Jomo Karuta card game was actively played at almost every elementary and junior high school in Gunma, as a part of the curriculum and extra curricular activities, which helped to spread the Jomo Karuta widely, and increased its popularity among the young and old.

Uta Karuta (poem cards) and Iroha Karuta (ABC cards), which are both originally Japanese, are losing their popularity in New Year's festivities, but the Jomo Karuta is so exceptionally popular in Gunma that the championship is held every year. Elementary and junior high school students from many parts of the prefecture vie for the championship. Gunma's First Jomo Karuta Game Championship started in 1948, the year after the publication of the cards, and continues down to the present time. The Jomo Karuta game is one of the winter scenes in the prefecture. In the background of its high popularity there is the educational value of the Jomo Karuta cards, and the role the annual championship plays, along with the Karuta's wide and deep penetration into the life and hearts of the Gunma people.

English Translation of the Original Japanese Version

With the recent development of internationalization and the high estimation of traditional local cultures in Japan, the Gunma Cultural Association, the publisher of the Jomo Karuta, decided that the Jomo Karuta should deserve some international recognition, and in 1998 the English language Jomo Karuta was published. I undertook the translation of two sets of 44 reading and picture cards and accompanying explanations.

This type of local Iroha Karuta has no precedent to follow in foreign countries. I was prepared to run some risk of translating the Japanese Karuta into English by

bringing out a native flavor of the Karuta. Before I set about my work, I thought of some possible demands on my translation, as on literal or free translation, a rhyming version. But after all I decided on a target of making each verse easy to understand, retaining as much as possible of the original Japanese and the spirit of the original, and of maintaining the rhythm, instead of the rhyme which I believe, at the cost of content and rhythm, is dearly bought.

However, I actually encountered some difficulties in the process of rendition in verse. In the original Japanese verses Gunma's geographical, historical characteristics are so much condensed that they have to be paraphrased if they do not bear literal translation into English. They are like Haiku in their conciseness. I believe the translator's interpretation is to be reflected clearly here in his translation, although I know that as the saying has it "Translators are traitors," which means translators go back on readers and do not tell them the truth. At any rate, it is characteristic of the Karuta cards to be smooth to the mouth and ear. I therefore kept in mind that Japanese or foreigners who read or hear the English cards for the first time should never fail to get the distinct message from the card, and that the rhythm of the verse should be maintained.

Making the most of the English version

The complete English version is the same with the Japanese in contents and pictures.

Picture card	Reading card	Explanation
 <p data-bbox="320 1648 576 1720">Thunder and Dry Winds</p>	<p data-bbox="699 1249 1034 1402">Thunder and dry winds, a deep sense of civic duty and humanity, characterize Gunma.</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="719 1532 967 1659"> <small>らい からつかぜ</small> 雷と空風 <small>ぎ りにんじょう</small> 義理人情 </p>	<p data-bbox="1158 1227 1417 1249">The Character of Gunma</p> <p data-bbox="1126 1272 1453 1644">Gunma's geographic location brings about dry winds blowing hard through the northern Kanto area from winter to spring, and thunder in summer. In addition to the way nature works in Gunma, the character of Gunma people is marked by a deep sense of civic duty and pure humanity; they devote themselves heart and soul to society and don't think just about themselves—that's a good custom Gunma can be proud of.</p>

The picture and a line in illustration at the bottom of the card provide hints for the game. The reading and picture cards are supplemented by explanations on the back of the reading card, which is designed to deepen one's knowledge of Gunma. It is this explanation that draws a line between the Jomo Karuta and other playing cards.

The English version could serve as useful teaching material by allowing students to become more knowledgeable about Gunma through the English language, while

arousing their interest in English and encouraging them to study it harder. Students can relate new knowledge to previously learned knowledge. Boys and girls in Gunma who are at home with the original Japanese verses can make the English cards much easier to understand and memorize.

The English Jomo Karuta game will also be a good opportunity for students to have fun while learning English. For little children who have not yet learned English, some of the English cards may be hard to read at first, and require them to practice it. But more than two thirds of the cards contain proper nouns as of mountains, rivers, noted places, historical spots and heroes etc., which are all familiar to children. They can take a hint from them and pick up the right card sooner. This holds true of older people who have forgotten English. In the card game, children who are ignorant of English but quick of hearing, can still enjoy the English card game, merely for the curiosity of the English cards and for the thrill of the game.

Besides playing the card game, students of the English language, from elementary through university level can benefit by composing their own reading card accompanied by the matching picture card. Students, baffled in reading, writing and grammar, but eager to express themselves or something in English even in a few words, are motivated by how a couple of words can express so much, by picking up as topics cultural, historical and geographical landmarks of their hometown or people around them.

A fair wind sprang up in English learning. In 2002 not a few public elementary schools in Japan started to provide optional English lessons as part of " The Period of Integrated Study ". The English card game will be a good chance again to get children acquainted with English. It is suggested that the translation of local playing cards (currently sets of this kind number over 500 in Japan) be made into English as a tool of carrying traditional local cultures to the world as well as of teaching English, to widen international cultural exchange.

Additional Information regarding Jomo Karuta and CD by Professor Inamura.

Check the web site below and see the work done by our member!

Reference: [//www.jomokaruta.org/index.htm](http://www.jomokaruta.org/index.htm)



英訳

稲村善二 元 国立群馬工業高等専門学校教授 現 群馬社会福祉大学教授

Material Development: Custom Made Videos for Your Class

Scott Berlin
Rikkyo University

I believed that more and more universities across Japan will be creating their own video materials for classroom use. If we look at the pressures these days on universities from many sectors of society, we will understand the big changes universities are going through. These changes are opening up an opportunity that custom-made videos can meet perfectly. With affordable software programs that make it possible for almost anyone to create professional videos, it is natural to conclude that universities will be developing their own videos.

Japanese universities are receiving great pressure from all directions; declining number of students entering universities, demands from businesses for highly skilled and innovative students, government reforms and the continued poor economy.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology reports that the number of 18 year-old students peaked in 1993 with 2.05 million. By the year 2009 it is expected that the number will have declined to 1.21 Million. In Fiscal 2001 19,987 businesses in Japan went bankrupt. In 2002 18,928 more businesses closed down. Continued poor performances by businesses is pressuring them to become more competitive and innovative. The business sector is looking to universities to supply them with new graduates that are better educated and able to meet the business demands of the 21 century.

To help universities answer the call from business, the Japanese government amended the School Education Law in the 155th Extraordinary Session of the Diet. There are several points to this amendment but one of the most significant changes affecting universities is that as of April 2004 all National Universities are classified as corporations. This allows universities to establish more autonomous administrations and have greater flexibility to create new departments and curriculums.

Japanese universities are responding to all these pressures by making big changes. Many junior colleges are closing down and being incorporated into universities. The Statistical Handbook of Japan reports that in 2000 there were 572 junior colleges, Two years later the number had decreased to 541. National Universities are reducing their numbers by consolidating. As of 2003, 24 National Universities had consolidated into 12. These changes are not showing any signs of slowing down. It is expected that there will be many more closures of junior colleges and consolidation of universities in the coming years.

Because of these changes universities are creating new curriculums. In many cases these new curriculums have unique and specialized courses, designed to attract and meet the needs of new students and the demands from Japan's business sector. However there are not always adequate or sufficient classroom materials for these new courses.

One could assume, with the plethora of English language text books available here in Japan, that there must be some suitable materials for a newly created course. This apparently is not the case because the volume of text books, and multi-media materials, keeps expanding, yet universities are continually searching for better suited texts and classroom materials that use the latest technology in new classes.

Why use video in the classroom? A University of Wisconsin study shows that students learn vocabulary twice as well when the instructor uses visual aids. A Harvard University study reports that people comprehend about 7% of information delivered verbally. They comprehend 87% when the information is delivered both verbally AND visually. There is plenty of evidence that clearly shows the benefits of using audio visual materials in the classroom.

Using video is already a widespread practice. Many universities use of commercially produced videos for classrooms instruction. Unfortunately too often these commercially produced videos do not match the level and needs of students. I have taught classes that used commercial videos of live news casts from America, short documentaries on such topics as retirement communities, electrical energy saving devices and competitions with children's toys. Those videos were not well matched to first year Japanese university student's level and interests.

With the current affordable software programs on the market, it is not difficult to create professional-looking videos. One only needs a digital video camera, a computer and the video editing software to make videos that are custom-made for unique courses. Adding background music, narration, special effects, transitions, subtitles and more are easy to do. These programs make it is as simple as cut and past. Applying special effects requires only a mouse click in most cases. Cutting scenes to exact times or exact moments is simple to do. The cost for such programs ranges from 30,000 yen to over 100,000 yen.

When finished with the editing of the video, it can be saved and used in many different formats; regular VHS video, CD or DVD. In addition, the video could be posted onto a web page so students could access it any time and numerous times.

It seems to be a perfect match; Japanese universities creating new curriculums and courses that need specific classroom materials, and committees and/or individuals within the universities, creating unique videos for these courses.

Reference:

English web page to Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

English web page to Statistical handbook of Japan 2003

Web page for Internet Tesol Journal, article on using video in the classroom.

Books on using video for language learning:

Stempleski S. and Tomalin B. (1990), *Video In Action: Recipes for Using Video in Language Teaching*. Prentice Hall

Cooper R., Lavery M., Rinvolutri M. (1991), *Video*. Oxford University press.

REPORTS

English Classes for College Students of the Health Sciences in Japan

Alexander von Altenstadt

I have been teaching English conversation classes to second year students at a prefectural college specialized in the health sciences for one semester. In this article I want to talk about some of my experiences and raise some questions to help us think about what the goals of English language instruction should be for college students aspiring to be professionally engaged in the health services field in the near future. My classes are optional classes and all the students have freely chosen to attend them.

Every week ninety minutes are available to help the students enrich their knowledge of English. As another Japanese English teacher also teaches an English writing class to a large number of my students, I have set out to focus on conversational English during the lessons. It is my impression that the students believe that they are in an era of internationalization and globalization, also here in Japan, and so a working knowledge of English might be a good asset or skill, which can be put to use not only in overseas travels, but also maybe, on certain occasions, in the health services industry, on the job as professional nurses, when coming in contact with a foreign (English speaking) patient.

I have chosen a textbook which introduces useful phrases and develops certain conversational skills, such as changing topics, being vague, returning questions, stating one's opinion, confirming the other's intended meaning and giving the speaker the tools to appear formal or casual, depending on the situation they are in. By incorporating pair practice, group discussion and listening exercises into the lessons as well as giving written assignments based on dialogues about a variety of general and health-related topics, I have tried to engage the students' interest in English, reduce their tendency to shy away from verbal encounters and help them to obtain some speaking tools which might come in handy in their professional and personal lives.

This is where I want to ask some questions to help both educators and students

think a little deeper and broader about what the aims and goals of English lessons should be at college level. Specifically in the health sciences area, a highly specialized and important field that plays a vital role in any modern society, miscommunication can lead to disastrous consequences. It is obviously the job and responsibility of the various highly educated instructors to impart their subject-specific knowledge to their students. So why do students learn English after all? Isn't it true that there is only a small chance of actually using English professionally in the future? Well it can certainly be said that high level English skills are essential for both academic writing skills and research purposes as well as when attending international conferences. However, in addition to these it can be said that in present day Japan, where more foreigners are living, increasingly also in rural areas outside the large major metropolitan centers, that it is increasingly possible or likely that a foreign patient with few or no Japanese language ability may need medical attention. If increasing numbers of health care professionals had a good working knowledge of English, it could help to reduce the anxiety of these patients and might become a valuable and valued skill also by their employers, the hospitals and clinics which employ health care professional, both public and private institutions. This could mean that good English skills make a health care professional even more employable and sought after in a tough job environment and can help to build up a solid resume for their personal career. It also would afford them access to a wider variety of professional experiences.

In order to avoid mistakes when questioning a patient in English, a readily available set of questions (questionnaire) using specialized terminology could be used, which each hospital and clinic has available at all times for immediate use. For future health care professionals to become familiar and confident with these, role playing exercises could be incorporated into the English lessons and mastering of a given set of medical terms in English could be made a mandatory part of the course content. Recent newspaper articles have been mentioning the Japanese governments public acknowledgement that it is actively studying proposals to set up a government sponsored and approved program to allow foreign-trained nurses to work in Japan for limited periods of time in the future to help meet the anticipated shortage of health care professionals as the population continues to age rapidly. Specifically, a number of nearby Asian countries have been mentioned, including the Philippines. Such a program would require Japanese language training for the foreign trained nurses before they commence work in Japan, to ensure that they can communicate sufficiently with other Japanese health professionals as well as with their patients. Who is going to train these nurses? Bilingual or nearly bilingual health professionals and other language instructors would be needed to impart these specialized skills. And a high level of English on the part of the Japanese nurses may also result in a smoother transition and a reduced chance of misunderstandings on the job.

REVIEWS

Health Talk: English for Hands-on Nursing

Authors: Yoko Watanabe, Pamela Uchida and Junko Yamamoto. Editors: Kaoru Sasaki, Motoi Saito, Lucille K. Kelly and Christine M. Henshaw. Tokyo: Pearson Education Japan, 2004. 87pp.

Morijiro Shibayama
Surugadai University

This is a good textbook. By using it at a nursing school, I've found my students show more interest in English than ever before. As you know, not all students like English at a nursing school. There are some who like English very much, but others say they wouldn't have chosen a nursing school if they liked English. Therefore, the hardest part of our work is to make them interested.

There are several tricks built in this textbook to attract students' interests. First, it is compiled with a focus on interaction with patients. Each of the twelve units has a dialogue in such a specific situation as admission of the patient, first meeting with the patient, explanation of hospital life, and so on. My students, including those who do not like English very much, listen to the dialogue attentively, probably because such an interaction is familiar to them.

Second, each unit has the sections, Study Goal and Vocabulary, before the dialogue. They are good. For instance, the goal of Unit 1 is to learn how to admit the patient and, with that goal stated in the Study Goal section, we could discuss the situation in simple English and get interested in it before we study the dialogue. I also find the technical terms in the Vocabulary section very useful to remind nursing students that they are professionals; another factor to motivate them to learn.

Third, there are various exercises after the dialogue; Medical Vocabulary, Listening Comprehension, Communication Skills and Action Words. They are mostly devised very well for students to learn with interest, not all of them are successful, though. My students liked the Vocabulary section of Unit 3; filling out of the admission chart. It seems to me that language skills can best be learned when they are related to a specific situation. In that sense, I found Supplement I, II, III and Grammar Tips excellent.

Fourth, the videotape and the CD accompanied with the textbook are helpful to raise students' interest. I was amused with the videotape in which both the nurse and the patient are Japanese and their language is dubbed into English. It was a little awkward to listen to them speak English with Japanese body language, but probably it might help students feel English language closer to them.

Last but not least, I'd like to mention the fact that the Japanese statement in the Study Goal section put the goal as a goal in nursing, not in language. Also some of

the units have a section, Notes on Nursing Techniques Q & A, where they discuss nursing skills, not language skills. I am impressed. Language is human, so the better as human, the better learner of language. I believe that is also the case with professionals, I mean, the better as professional, the better learner of language.

RECORDS -The meetings of JALT Gunma held in the first half of 2004-

1) JANUARY MEETING

Topic: Raising children bilingually and biculturally in Japan by Frances Causer

Date & Time: January 25th, 2004, 14:00 - 16:30

Place: Maebashi Institute of Technology (Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College)

2) FEBRUARY MEETING

Topic: Effects of Repetition on EFL Listening Comprehension: Development of a CALL System to Improve EFL Listening Comprehension Skills

by Yutaka Yamauchi

Date & Time: February 22nd, 2004, 14:00-16:30

Place: Maebashi Institute of Technology (Maebashi Koka Daigaku)

3) APRIL MEETING

Topic: Adapting Online Reading Materials by James Duggan

Date & Time: April 25th, 2004, 14:00 - 16:30

Place: Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College

4) MAY MEETING

Topic: A Teaching Strategy: How to Develop Communicative Competence through Shadowing and L1 Speaker by Atsuko Yamazaki, Kazuko Nomachi

Date & Time: Sunday, May 16th, 2004, 14:00-16:30

Place: Maebashi Institute of Technology (Maebashi Koka Daigaku)

5) JUNE MEETING

Topic : A Way to Use Graded Readers Effectively and Extensively by Rie Iwahashi

Date & Time: June 20th, 2004, 14:00 - 16:30

Place: Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College

6) JULY MEETING

Topic: Material Development: Custom Made Videos for Your Class by Scott Berlin

Date & Time: July 18th, 2004, 14:00 - 16:30

Place: Gunma Prefectural College of Health Sciences (Gunma Kenritsu Iryo Tandai)

7) The 16th JALT-Gunma Summer Workshop at Kusatsu

Theme: Vocabulary Acquisition in English as a Foreign Language

Dates: August 22nd and 23rd

Main Lecturer: Michael McCarthy, Professor Emeritus, University of Nottingham

Presenters:

Marie Cosgrove; An Underutilized Motivator; Success in Language Acquisition

- Nicole Patterson; Functional Grammar and Genre Based Teaching
Nicholas Bufton; On Whose Authority: The Rational for Building a Business
Correspondence Corpus
Wayne Pennington; Learning from Children's Picture Books
Hideto Harashima; Incorporating a Custom-Made E-learning Component into
Classroom
Kazuhiro Shinada; How Culture Determines Complimenting Speech Acts:
Comparison of Japanese and American Compliments
Stacy Clause; Perspectives on the Jonan English Pilot Education Program

8) SEPTEMBER MEETING

Topic: Learner Opportunities Outside the Classroom by Kenneth Biegel
Date & Time: September 12th , 14:00 - 16:30
Place: Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College

9) OCTOBER MEETING

Topic: Creating a Textbook for the Teaching of English for Science and Technology
by Tom Goodier
Date & Time: October 31st , 14:00-16:00
Place: Maebashi Institute of Technology (Maebashi Koka Daigaku)

10) NOVEMBER MEETING

Topic: From Competition to Cooperation; games in the ESL classroom by Chris
Hunt
Date & Time: November 28th , 14:00 - 16:30
Place: Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College

11) JALT-Gunma Christmas Party in 2004 (Potluck Party)

Date & Time: December 12th , 17:00- 19:00
Place: Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College

*****2005 JALT-Gunma Officers*****

At the business meeting held on October 31st after the regular study session, the following new officers for the coming year 2005 were elected.

President: Morijiro Shibayama

Recording Secretaries: David Gann, Tom Goodier, Barry Keith

Publicity Chairs: Akiko Jimbo, Rieko Nakajima, Yuko Haraguchi

Social Chairs: Yoko Miyazaki, Masami Kogure, Yaeko Haraguchi

Program Chairs: Michele Steele, Hisatake Jimbo, Hideto Harashima

Treasurers: Kazuhiko Iino, Masami Kogure

Membership Chairs: Yoko Kamo, Kazuhiro Shinada, Junko Yamazaki

Facility Chairs: Wayne Pennington, Yoko Watanabe, Hideto Harashima

Newsletter Editors: Barry Keith, Yoko Watanabe

Web-page Editor: Hideto Harashima

The official web site of JALT Gunma can be found in <http://harahara.net/JALT/>



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Represented by Morijiro Shibayama & Renee Sawazaki

Office: Wayne Pennington, Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College

1154-4 Koyahara-machi Maebashi, Gunma Japan 379-2192

Tel/Fax: 027-266-9135

Edited by the JALT Gunma newsletter committee:

Alexander von Altenstadt & Yoko Watanabe

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Tel: 027-221-5015 Fax: 027-224-8082