

First Reading: Second Thoughts on English Studies in the Japanese College Curriculum

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Abstract The argument of this paper is in two parts. The first, 'History/Theory', outlines the dominant current modes of English study in the Japanese college in terms of non-integration, locating some of the historical determinants of the situation in various Western and Japanese models of bilingual exchange, and suggesting some of its negative educational and cultural effects. The second part, 'Future/Praxis', more tentatively suggests a way towards greater integration based largely on a re-recognition of the centrality of reading skills development at the college level. Here the argument proceeds largely through a series of examples of types of reading exercise, recommending a shift from analytic reading (word-by-word recoding) towards synthetic reading (in three stages, termed 'Approach', 'Understanding' and 'Use').

1. History/Theory

The following discussion has a dual focus. The narrow focus concerns the offering of proposals for adjustments to the curriculum organisation and teaching methodologies of English study currently dominant in the Japanese Liberal Arts college, where some form of culture studies will be the major subject of most students. Yet the overall concern is not narrowly institutional, organisational or methodological. The broad focus entails an (admittedly brief and synoptic) engagement with particular theories and histories of foreign

language learning, which have relevance to a much wider range of institutions and situations, and which raise more fundamental problems concerning intercultural exchange, both local (the role of non-Japanese members of Japanese educational institutions, for example) and international (for instance, cultural imperialism).

Consider the simple diagram below:

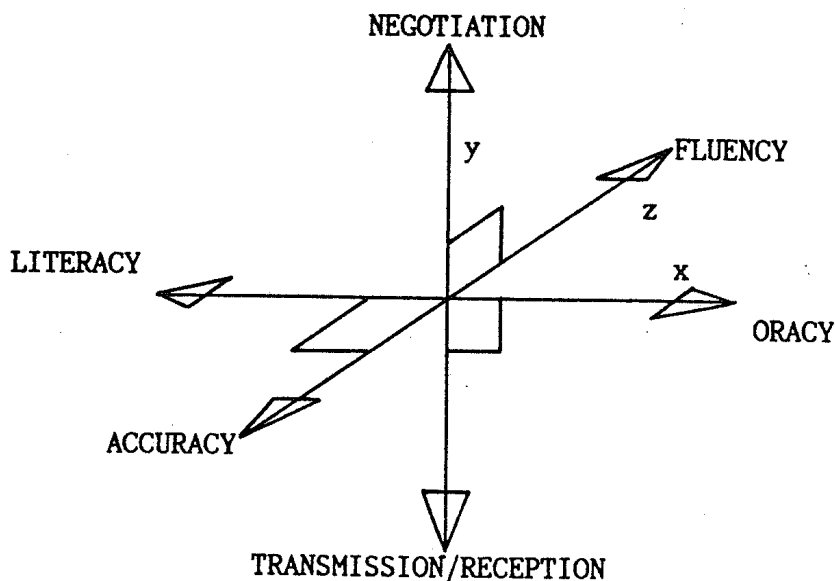
	Reception	Production
Visual medium	READING	WRITING
Aural medium	LISTENING	SPEAKING

Here we see language usage divided into the familiar 'four skills' analysed along two dimensions according to the medium of expression (text/voice) and the role of the user (passive/active).¹ If seen in terms of the above diagram, the current dominant patterns of college English achieve a certain unity and coherence, reflected in the following story.

Japan's relative geographical and later political isolation produced a long history of cultural exchange perceived almost exclusively in terms of the reception of texts from other cultures and consequently a tradition of foreign language study grounded in the act of reading. This tradition retains much of its force even today. But from the time of the Meiji restoration external pressure and Japan's own recognition of its changing position in the world have brought about the perception of a need to complement the indigenous tradition with an emphasis on oral production. Though various attempts have been made to achieve this through other means, the principle strategy has been to introduce increasing numbers of native-speakers of English into educational institutions in a variety of roles.² This has produced certain tensions, but the result is at least a relatively balanced programme of language study, offering to the motivated student something like the best of both worlds. This pattern can be

perceived in the most common current college English curriculum, with its dual structure--the principle emphasis on receptive reading in kôdoku (reading) classes taught by Japanese teachers of English, and the auxiliary focus on oral production in kaiwa (conversation) classes taught by native speakers. As for the future, given both the demographic downturn which will begin to affect the number of entrants to higher education in the 1990s, and the evident marketability of oral English as witnessed by the boom in conversation schools in the 1980s, the way forward for the small Liberal Arts college, which in any case is both heavily committed to foreign language study and particularly vulnerable to market shifts, seems to be simply to increase even further the emphasis on English oral production in the college programme.

While the diagram above and the story extrapolated from it are not entirely without foundation, we wish to argue that the assumptions underlying both are considerably oversimplified in pedagogical as well as broader cultural terms, and, in particular, that the programme for the future is dangerously impoverished. Consider then the rather more complex representation of language use in the diagram below:



In this second diagram, the following innovations are introduced:

- (1) there are three dimensions of variability rather than two, represented by the x, y, and z axes of a 3D graph;
- (2) variability is now a matter of degree rather than a simple binary choice;
- (3) the variables now represent not the surface structure of language usage (the mechanics of communication) but the deep structure of language use (the social and cognitive functions of communication), thus removing the usefulness of the traditional concept of the 'four skills' but instead allowing discussion to move seamlessly between the levels of language-teaching methodology and cultural interchange.³

Here the terminology clearly requires some explanation. ORACY and LITERACY are preferred to 'Visual medium' and 'Aural medium' to suggest also the types of cultural practice which accompany the choice of medium. The rejection of the opposition between 'Reception' and 'Production' in favour of the cline from TRANSMISSION/RECEPTION (one-way communication) to NEGOTIATION (two-way communication) reflects: (a) the recognition not only that certain forms of verbal communication (eg conversation and correspondence) are reciprocal while others (eg listening to a lecture or writing a book) are not, but also that activities such as listening to a lecture or reading a book are not necessarily passive;⁴ and (b) the recognition that the cultural dimension of learning a foreign language can vary from desiring or being forced to become part of a culture associated with the target language (as in naturalisation or linguistic imperialism) to the process of negotiation of social and cognitive meanings via the target language.⁵ The new dimension of ACCURACY and FLUENCY⁶ reflects not only different orientations of language-learning activity (towards linguistic competence or towards communicative competence)⁷ but also

different types of cultural practice (eg varying degrees of self-monitoring according to context, or varying degrees of intensiveness of reading according to purpose).

Perhaps we can clarify this model further by putting it to use in re-telling the story of the formation of the present structure of college English studies. In this version we will re-examine the two dominant language-learning traditions, the indigenous Japanese pattern (here termed yakudoku) and the imported Western pattern (here termed TESOL), and characterize their interrelationship in terms of contradiction and inadequacy rather than complementarity.

The dominant domestic tradition of language teaching is yakudoku, literally 'translation-reading'.⁸ Though often rendered as 'grammar-translation', recalling the dominant method of modern language teaching in the grammar schools of nineteenth-century Europe with its focus on the isolated sentence, the method more accurately reflects the earlier European scholastic tradition of decoding foreign-language texts, and in fact derives from methods of reading Chinese texts developed in Japan many centuries ago. In its most explicit form, yakudoku is a three stage operation involving first a word-by-word translation of the target sentence, secondly a reordering of the words thus derived, and finally a recoding into Japanese syntax. Though the method is seldom practiced today in such explicit form, recent nationwide surveys suggest that the large majority of Japanese high school and university teachers of English still use the modern implicit version of yakudoku as their principle method.⁹ This is particularly true at the university level, where the larger presence of native-speaker teachers of English has generally relieved Japanese professors of such pressure to incorporate oral production into classroom methodology as has been felt by high school teachers.

If we characterise the type of communicative activity emphasised by the method in terms of our model, we will note a very strong orientation towards the three poles LITERACY, TRANSMISSION/RECEPTION, and ACCURACY. From the point of view of the overall educational aims of the Liberal Arts college, the emphasis on LITERACY has considerable benefits; the method does allow kôdoku classes to deal with texts of considerable cultural 'weight' and difficulty, and helps to provide a bridge to the courses in foreign culture offered later in the college programme. Yet the degree of emphasis on TRANSMISSION/RECEPTION and ACCURACY introduces enormous inefficiencies and distortions into the methods available for studying foreign culture. In particular yakudoku's word-by-word recoding introduces a sharp experiential break between native-language and foreign-language reading, simultaneously reducing reading speed to a snail's pace, and encouraging the rapid and constant transformation of foreign cultural forms into Japanese cultural terms, thus minimising the process of negotiation and interpretation which should be inherent in intercultural exchange.

Because of its much greater heterogeneity, to briefly characterise the nature of the imported tradition is to run an even greater risk of serious oversimplification. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt of the strength of the emphasis on ORACY within TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) as practised in Japan. Two different forms of pressure might be discernible here:

- (1) pressure from within the domestic system for the imported system to function as an inverted image of itself;
- (2) a distinct tendency within twentieth-century Western linguistics to invert the traditional hierarchy and assert the primacy of the oral.

This second point requires elaboration. While there is no doubt of

the historical priority of speech, and little doubt of the biological priority, the assumption of the structural priority of speech ignores the existence of ideographic writing, while the assertion of the universal functional or communicative priority of the aural medium seems increasingly open to question.¹⁰ At the time when the telephone, the tape-recorder and the radio were in the technological vanguard, when the world seemed set to become 'the global village', such an assertion was incontestable. It seems less warranted in the age of the global network--the age of facsimile machines, modem-linked personal computers/wordprocessors, and satellite TV broadcasting. In the age of the development of the International Phonetic Alphabet it was clear that voice was infinitely more information-rich, but in the present, when analogue recordings are rapidly being replaced by digital, the subordination of text seems increasingly dubious.¹¹

Similar doubts must now arise concerning the shift in Western foreign-language teaching from nineteenth-century school grammar-translation methods towards the highly systematised multinational TESOL industry which has insistently tended to go beyond an advocacy of an aural/oral emphasis in the early stages of language training towards the assumption that face-to-face interaction is the universal paradigm of human communication. This hypostatization of the oral is almost equally apparent in the direct method, Palmer's 'Oral Method', the audiolingual method, and the audiovisual method.¹² Attempts to institute a 'reading method', such as those of West in India, or Bond and Coleman in the United States, have remained marginal.¹³ Even the recent emergence of the 'communicative approach', with its emphasis on the diversity of the communicative needs of the learner and consequently on the necessary variety of the pedagogical strategies of the teacher, the influence of which is readily apparent in the present argument, has not entirely removed the fixation with face-to-face

interaction.¹⁴ More generally the narrow preoccupation with method at the expense of educational content or purpose in the dominant TESOL tradition has tended either to create a cultural and cognitive vacuum at the centre of its pedagogy or, through the unquestioned assumption of the universality of its own cultural parameters, to serve as an unconscious or conscious cover for a dilute form of cultural imperialism. Thus, whatever its claims to greater efficiency, the imported Western language-teaching tradition does not always seem to have been immediately beneficial in the context of higher education institutions dedicated to intercultural study and research.

The final point in this negative version of the story of the development of college English in Japan, is that, in the light of the above analysis, the two dominant traditions appear to be not so much integrated and complementary, as disintegrated and incomplete. The ORACY of the one seems likely to cancel out the LITERACY of the other, while the system as a whole seems to lack any serious attention towards FLUENCY and NEGOTIATION in communication. The overall effect is often a series of fractures in the fabric of the educational institution: a nonsensical conceptual opposition between eigo (English language) and eikaiwa (English conversation); a rupture in the curriculum between attention to the forms of communication and to its contents; and frequently a socially damaging differentiation between the role and status of Japanese and non-Japanese teachers of English.

If the above alternative model of language use and the second story that has been derived from it have any validity, clearly planning for the future must be considerably more problematic than was suggested earlier. The central point is that occasion must be created for discussion and negotiation between the advocates or practitioners of the different traditions. The chief suggestion here, which will be

developed in the second half of the paper, is that reading skills should be restored unequivocally to the centre of the English programme of the Liberal Arts college, not in the form of yakudoku but in the form of new classroom reading practices which shift the emphasis significantly towards FLUENCY and NEGOTIATION while retaining cultural seriousness, and which can be employed comfortably by both Japanese and non-Japanese teachers of English. Yet, while it is assumed that the term eikaiwa should be removed from the curriculum, the recommendation is for a shift of emphasis as regards aural/oral skills rather than a total removal of emphasis. There are three specific suggestions here:

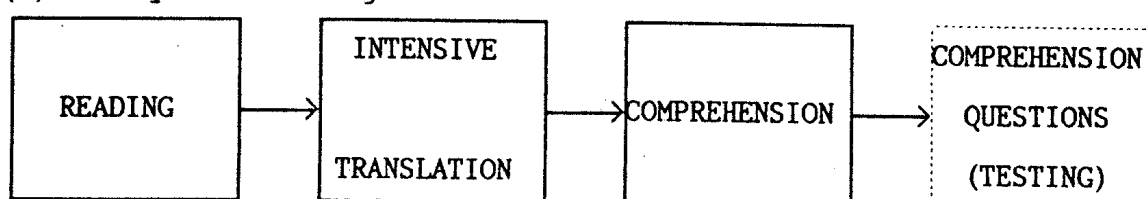
- (1) that aural/oral skills practice should be more integrated with and often derive explicitly from work on textual skills;
- (2) that exercises in oral interaction should preferably take as their model the language of classroom exchange itself, rather than fictional social situations;¹⁵ and
- (3) that there should be increased stress on fluency listening, which would simultaneously support the movement away from yakudoku towards fluency reading, and prepare the student for the study skill of learning from lectures in the target language.

The overall aim is to shift emphasis as rapidly as possible from learning English to learning through English.

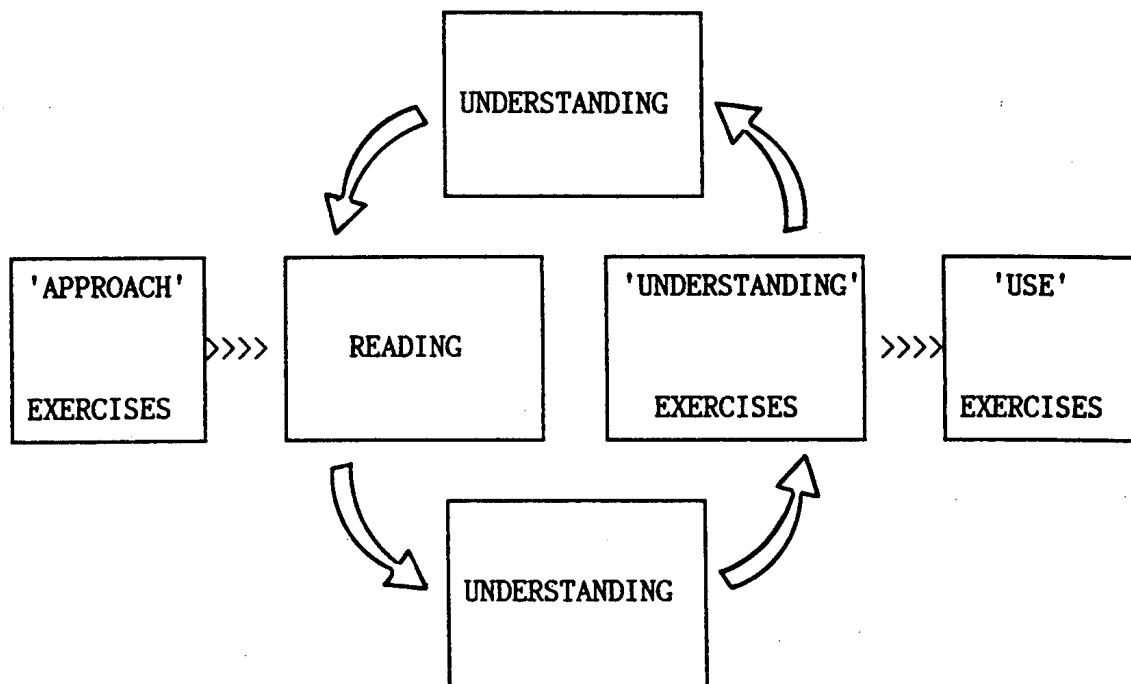
2. Future/Praxis

The diagrams below suggest the main differences between what we term the analytic and the synthetic approaches to reading.

(1) Analytic Reading



(2) Synthetic Reading



Analytic reading involves a one-way movement away from the English text towards a recoded Japanese version. The production of this version is taken as the evidence of comprehension. In the synthetic model, the movement towards an understanding of the text is more complicated. It begins with a period of preparation for reading, in which students think about, for example, the subject matter and its probable vocabulary (APPROACH), and is followed by a period of reading and thinking about the text itself, in which students develop a gradually more comprehensive understanding of it (UNDERSTANDING). The third stage (USE) represents an open-ended period of time after reading has been completed, in which students may use both the substantive information that they have gained from the text and the language items (new words, for instance) that they have encountered.

The synthetic model has many advantages, both as a method of reading per se and as a focus for the use of English in the classroom. These advantages can be summarised as follows:

- (1) Whereas analytic reading requires the learning of a new method, synthetic reading is more akin to reading in one's native

language. Already established reading skills can be transferred from reading in Japanese to reading in English.

- (2) Working through the Reading--Task--Understanding cycle of the synthetic model inculcates sound reading habits in students, moving the explicit focus of the process away from content and syntax and towards the ways in which mode of reading varies according to purpose.
- (3) Synthetic reading provides students with a model in which comprehension is developed not only gradually but also critically.
- (4) The Reading--Task--Understanding cycle provides students with successive stages of completion and satisfaction throughout the reading process.
- (5) Varied reading exercises relieve the pressure on the text itself to sustain reader interest.
- (6) A shift in emphasis from analytic to synthetic reading produces a corresponding shift away from a teacher-oriented class focused on reception, towards a more student-centred class focused on negotiation.
- (7) Even if student-student interaction in the classroom takes place predominantly in Japanese, the fact that the exercises are written in English means that English is functioning throughout as a medium of communication as well as an object of study.

The remainder of this paper presents a variety of practical examples of synthetic reading tasks built around the first eight paragraphs of the introduction to a book on the history of writing. It is the type of exercise which is exemplary and we are not of course suggesting that the level of this text would be appropriate for all college classes.

APPROACH

Example A recreates in the classroom the pre-reading situation in which a student needs to predict likely content from the titles of texts—that time at an early stage in research, for example, when a student needs to guess which of several books is most likely to give her the information she needs. One of the offered titles belongs to the text to be read, and so this early guessing will serve to focus the student's attention and call to mind useful vocabulary.

Example A

Which of the following books might give us the information we need to answer the questions below?

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.

Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1978; 2nd ed. 1987.

Gaur, Albertine. A History of Writing.

London: The British Library, 1984, rev. ed. 1987

McLeish, Kenneth. The Penguin Companion to the Arts
in the 20th Century.

Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1986.

1. When did George Orwell write the novel Burmese Days?
2. What is the major difference between ways of writing based on sound and ways of writing based on ideas?
3. Is the verb 'to write' used correctly in the sentence 'Was Jane Eyre written by Charlotte Bronte or Emily Bronte?'
4. Was Pablo Picasso a famous writer or a famous painter?
5. Are prehistoric rock paintings considered forms of writing?

Example B is designed to elicit vocabulary from the students on the subject of the text. Any essential words from the first paragraph of the text not elicited could be introduced at this stage by the

teacher. In the case of our example text, we would want to make sure that the two pairs of words 'oral'/'written' and 'transmit'/'decode' were included.

Example B

You are going to read 'What is writing and who needs it?', the introduction to Albertine Gaur's A History of Writing. Write down the first five English words that this title makes you think of. In groups of four, compare your lists and go on to talk about what writing is used for, and who needs to be able to write.

[This process would end in a whole-class discussion, with essential vocabulary written on the board.]

UNDERSTANDING

I. Skimming/working at speed/grasping key points

Examples C and D recreate the style of reading that a student might use to get a general picture of the content of a passage, perhaps before deciding whether or not it was worth reading in detail. This type of exercise helps break the student of the habit of reading word-by-word from the beginning to the end of a text by only allowing them to see key parts of it. It shows how a well-written text signposts its key points through the topic sentences of its paragraphs.

Example C

Below you will find the opening sentence of each of the first eight paragraphs of the text "What is writing and who needs it?" Using these sentences, predict which of the following the text will explain:

1. What writing is.
2. How to rank different styles of writing into different levels of value.

3. How different styles of writing can be divided into groups.
4. Why certain societies will tend to develop particular ways of writing.
5. Why sound writing, unlike thought writing, has no disadvantages.
6. What the clear-cut distinction between sound writing and thought writing is based on.
7. How to write in Persian script.
8. How particular writing systems have affected life in the societies that use them.

- *All writing is information storage.*
- *Writing has other advantages, too.*
- *If all writing is information storage, then all writing is of equal value.*
- *Basically, all forms of writing belong to either one or the other of two distinct groups--thought writing or sound writing.*
- *Though the division between the two groups is absolute and basic, it would be wrong to assume that it is also clear-cut, that all forms of writing belong, wholly and exclusively, to either the one or the other group.*
- *The word 'evolve' has been used on purpose.*
- *What kind of writing a society evolves, or chooses, depends largely if not wholly on the kind of society it is.*
- *Let us here briefly recount: what exactly are the advantages and disadvantages of the two main groups?*

Example D

By referring to the opening sentences, choose which of the following summaries of the text you think is more likely to be accurate.

1. Writing is a system of storing information based on the depiction either of sound or of thought. Both of these approaches

have their advantages and disadvantages, and all types of writing are of equal value. Different societies will develop or choose the type or types of writing which best suit them.

2. There are two main forms of writing--sound writing and thought writing. Both are used for storing information. A particular style of writing will evolve in a particular society according to the nature of that society. Some styles of writing are better than others.

II. Reading despite unfamiliar vocabulary/coping with 'gaps'

Example E recreates the situation where, without recourse to a dictionary, a student has to read and make some sense of a text that includes a fairly high number of unfamiliar words. In creating this exercise, the vocabulary of the text's first paragraph was checked against the 2,000 word Longman Defining Vocabulary¹⁶ and all words not included in that list were blacked out. Three of the four words pre-taught in Example B were not on the list but were allowed to remain in the text. In order to simplify the exercise, other words were also removed to streamline the text and reduce distraction. Were the class used to this type of exercise, this last step would not be necessary.

Example E

The following is the first paragraph of the text with some of its words removed. Make as much sense out of it as you can, and then answer the questions below.

All writing is information storage. It is not the only form of information storage. Long before ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ human memory ♦ the same purpose. In most cases it was the memory of a specially trained ♦ ♦ group ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦. ♦ differences exist between these two forms of information storage ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ transmission ♦ ♦ ♦

♦ ♦. Oral transmission needs personal, ♦ (depending on the nature ♦ ♦ of the information) ♦ ♦ between two or more ♦ who have to be physically present at the same time and in the same place. Enough time has to be spent to satisfy (though never fully) the one who transmits the information that the other has ♦ stored it in his memory, that he will be able to ♦ ♦ ♦ transmit it correctly. In the case of writing, the information is stored ♦ on an ♦ object, and can be ♦ ♦ used at any time, in any place (in the case of moveable objects such as books etc.) by all those who are able to ♦ ♦ decode it. Here too, memory plays an important part, but only in the form of a one-time effort--that of learning the rules ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ of a particular form ♦ ♦. Afterwards all information stored in this way is ♦ to those who have ♦ the rules.

[Questions to follow this reading could be quite simple, of the True/False or multiple choice type. For example:

1. 'Memory plays a less important part in the written transformation of information than it does in the oral.' True or False?
2. Which of the following does the oral transmission of information require?
 - a. moveable objects
 - b. a one-time effort of memory
 - c. a speaker and a listener physically present at the same time in the same place

In addition, students might be asked to choose the fifteen words from the edited paragraph that they would need, in addition to basic verbs, prepositions etc, in order to write a very short summary of the main points of the paragraph; or to choose between two or three versions of a summary of the paragraph, as in 'Example D' above.]

III. Transposing information into another form/overall comprehension

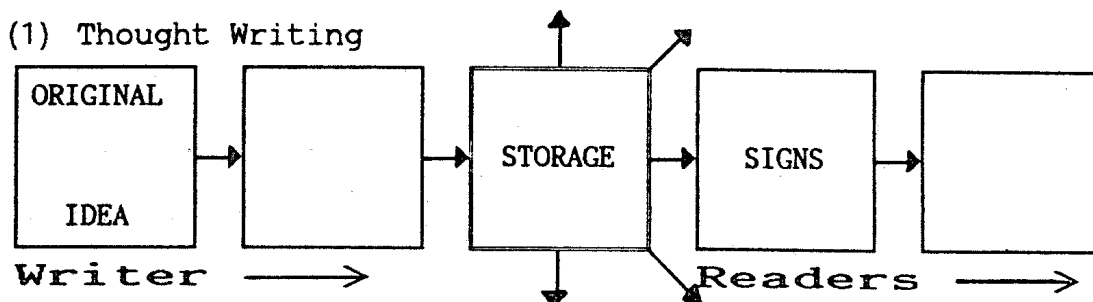
Example F is an exercise which requires the student to recode

information. In a sense, it is a translation exercise—the student translates information given in the text from discursive form into diagram form. This is the kind of process a student might use when making notes on a text for study purposes.

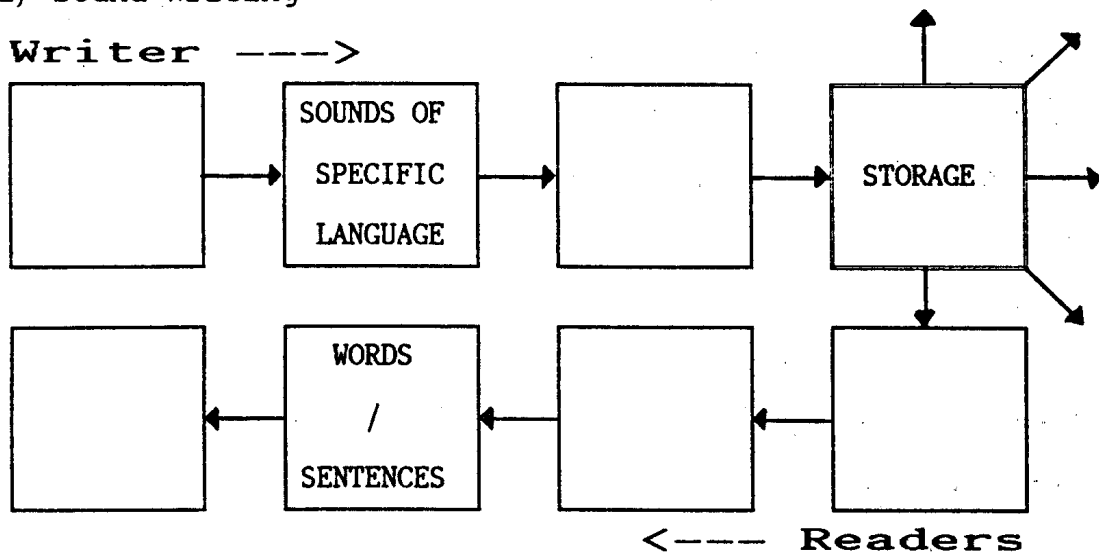
Example F

Read the following description of the processes of transmitting information by thought writing and by sound writing from Paragraph 4 of the text. Then summarise the main steps in these processes by completing the diagrams below.

Thought writing transmits an idea directly; the drawing of a leg means 'leg' or 'to go', the drawing of a tree means 'tree' (it could of course also mean 'fresh', 'green', 'life' etc.), the drawing of two trees can mean 'forest' and so forth, in any language. Sound writing (phonetic writing) is far more complex... An idea has to be translated first into the sounds of a particular word or sentence in a particular language, then those sounds have to be made visible in the form of engraved, painted or incised signs on the surface of a definite object, signs which more often than not bear no relation to the content of the original thought. In order to consult the information (and ultimately the whole purpose of information storage is communication) these visual signs have to be translated back into the sounds of the same language, and from this the word, the sentence and the original idea have to be reconstructed in the mind of the reader.



(2) Sound Writing

IV. Working with detail

Both True/False and multiple choice comprehension questions can usefully narrow the focus of the reader on to the detail of a text. Both can be written in such a way that the reader increases comprehension of the text by working on the questions. In Examples G and H we give two instances of vocabulary exercises which, by narrowing the range of possible meanings to a given set, help readers to grasp the general meaning of a word in the text. By looking at both the context in which the item occurs and at the choice of possible meanings, the reader should be able to figure out the general meaning of the unfamiliar word. The exercise gives help with all words not included in the Longman Defining Vocabulary. The synonyms and definitions are based on definitions given in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.

Example G

From the list of synonyms and definitions below, choose one to fit each of the underlined vocabulary items in the following text taken from Paragraph 2.

Writing has other advantages, too. There are limits to the amount of data that human memory can retain. There is, in theory at least, no limit to the amount of information that can be stored in written form. In addition, being free of the often onerous task of having to assimilate completely (and perhaps permanently) some particular information, this information, consulted in written form, can be used as a basis for new speculations.

- a) for a long time/forever
- b) understand fully and be able to use properly
- c) difficult/heavy/troublesome
- d) informed guess
- e) the facts or principles from which something is developed
- f) go to a book or person for information or advice
- g) a general principle, not a practical method
- h) facts/information
- i) keep possession of/hold in place/avoid losing

Example H

For each of the underlined words or phrases in the following text from the end of Paragraph 2, choose the best synonym or definition from the lists below:

Learning by heart has the disadvantage that it does not encourage critical thinking; and it has indeed always been preferred for poetry (religious and secular), history (legendary, epic, semi-factual) or for secret knowledge not meant to go beyond the limits of a particular group.

learning by heart: a. memorizing

b. learning about things you love

critical thinking: a. thinking about good and bad points

b. thinking of criticisms and complaints

- preferred: a. chosen instead of something else
 b. forgotten more easily
- secular: a. not serious b. not religious
- legendary, epic,
semi-factual : a. types of poetry b. types of history

Examples I and J are exercises designed to help students to develop a sensitivity to the points of view of a text--the cultural assumptions that it is making and its line of argument within the context of an implied larger debate. Example I considers the cultural background and bias of the text (here conveniently acknowledged by the author) and Example J considers the way in which the text places itself within a context of scholarly debate.

Example I

Look carefully at the following sentences from Paragraph 4 of the text and then discuss in pairs what they tell us about the cultural background of the author and what she is assuming about her audience.

Thought writing transmits an idea directly. . . . Sound writing (phonetic writing) is far more complex. It is not as we, on the basis of our own experience and training might be tempted to assume, more natural, nor even necessarily more effective.

Example J

Now read through Paragraph 3 below, where the author argues against still-prevalent theories of the development of writing systems, and rejects the terminology which accompanies them. Assign each of the following phrases to the terminology that the author prefers or to that which she rejects.

equal value	essential to survival
function effectively	primitive scripts
forerunners of writing	transitional scripts
forms of information storage	proper writing

If all writing is information storage, then all writing is of equal value. Each society stores the information essential to its survival, the information which enables it to function effectively. There is in fact no essential difference between prehistoric rock painting, memory aids (mnemonic devices), wintercounts, tallies, knotted cords, pictographic, syllabic and consonantal scripts, or the alphabet. There are no primitive scripts, no forerunners of writing, no transitional scripts as such (terms frequently used in books dealing with the history of writing), but only societies at a particular level of economic and social development using certain forms of information storage. If a form of information storage fulfils its purpose as far as a particular society is concerned then it is (for this particular society) 'proper' writing.

USE

Here we offer two types of exercise which function as introductions to the long-term use of a student's understanding of a text, one focusing on lexis and the other on content and cultural bias. Example K gives students the chance to practice using new words--not just remembering their 'meaning' but becoming familiar with them in a variety of authentic cultural contexts. It is a cloze exercise recycling words from Example G, prepared using definitions taken again from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Example L provides students with another approach to the subject of the text, this time written from a more familiar cultural perspective in their native language, thus explicitly encouraging cultural 'negotiation'.

Example K

Choose the correct word to fit into the following sentences from the list below. You will not need four of the words. Change the form of the word to fit the grammar of the sentence.

1. We can't tell you the results of the survey until we have looked at all the _____.
2. His business has been taken over by a big corporation, but he _____ some control over it.
3. In _____ the train should arrive at 9:15, but in practice it is quite often late.
4. Have you _____ a doctor about your cough?
5. There's some _____ that the Prime Minister will resign.

data	assimilate	basis	theory	onerous
retain	prefer	consult	speculation	

Example L

Consult the article on the history of writing in an appropriate Japanese encyclopaedia such as the Heibonsha¹⁷ and make notes on the main differences in cultural assumptions from the introduction to Albertine Gaur's book. Compare your notes with other students.

The above series of reading exercises is intended not as a comprehensive typology but only as a varied selection of possibilities, illustrating the shift from analytic to synthetic reading. Similar exercises, or different exercises with similar principles, can with relative simplicity be designed by the individual teacher or teaching programme to suit the varying contents of different texts and the varying needs of different groups of students. Nevertheless, if the above arguments have any general validity, there is clearly a need for the wider availability of college reading texts

which go beyond the most common format of 'Text--(Comprehension Questions)--Reading Notes in Japanese', which is clearly sympathetic to the yakudoku method.¹⁸

Notes

¹ The diagram is adapted from HG Widdowson Teaching Language as Communication (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) 57-8.

² See, for an example of the former, the work of Harold E Palmer in Japan (described in Norman Y Yamamoto 'The Oral Method: Harold E Palmer and the Reformation of the Teaching of the English Language in Japan' English Language Teaching Journal XXXII, 2, 151-8, Jan 1978), and of the latter, the expansion of the JET programme in the 1980s.

³ For the distinction between 'language usage' and 'language use', see Widdowson Teaching Language as Communication 1-21.

⁴ See: Widdowson Teaching Language as Communication 57-76; also Mikhail Bakhtin's sociolinguistic theories which see the dialogic principle operating in all human discourse not merely conversational dialogue--in, for example, The Dialogic Imagination ed Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

⁵ See Christopher J Brumfit 'The English Language, Ideology and International Communication' in his Problems and Principles in English Language Teaching (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980) 85-97.

⁶ For this use of the terms 'fluency' and 'accuracy', see Brumfit Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁷ The concept 'linguistic competence' derives from Noam Chomsky Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1965), while 'communicative competence' derives from DH Hymes On Communicative Competence (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971).

⁸ See Nobuyuki Hino 'Yakudoku: Japan's Dominant Tradition in Foreign Language Learning' JALT Journal, X, 1/2, 45-55, Nov 1988.

⁹ See the Japan Association of College English Teachers surveys reported in I Koike et al General Survey of English Language Teaching at Colleges and Universities in Japan (2 vols: Teacher's View & Students' View) (Tokyo: Research Group for College English Teaching in Japan, 1983 & 1985).

¹⁰ For a brief summary of the arguments in favour of the priority of speech, see John Lyons Language and Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 11-17.

¹¹ Compare Jacques Derrida's critique of the 'phonocentrism' of post-Saussurean linguistics in L'écriture et la différence (Paris: Seuil, 1967).

¹² For a brief history of these methods, see APR Howatt A History of English Language Teaching (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 212-28; for a theoretical description, see HH Stern Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 97-116 & 452-476.

¹³ See: MP West Learning to Read a Foreign Language: An Experimental Study (New York: Longmans, Green, 1926); OF Bond The Reading Method: An Experiment in College French (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); and A Coleman The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1929). For a general discussion of modern 'reading methods', see Stern Fundamental Concepts 460-2.

¹⁴ This was particularly true in the early stages of the development of 'communicative' language teaching theory, when needs were often analysed in rather reductive fashion. Compare the seminal research carried out under the aegis of the Council of Europe, where the initial specification was developed with the communicative needs of the tourist as a model (see, for example, J Van Ek with LG Alexander Threshold Level English (Oxford: Pergamon Press/Council of Europe, 1975) 13-4), or the way in which Wilkins' work on communicative alternatives to the grammatical syllabus (see, for example, DA Wilkins Notional Syllabuses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976)) in practice largely resulted in the subordination of the role of notions to that of functions, thus prioritizing social and oral modes and diminishing cognitive and literate modes. However, the more recent work of Widdowson and Brumfit, among others, has done much to restore the balance.

¹⁵ Here 'classroom exchange' is of course intended to include student-student as well as student-teacher interaction. This suggestion assumes the extensive use of small-group and pair work in the language classroom.

¹⁶ See Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1978; 2nd ed 1987) B15-B22 (word list) & F8-F9 (explanation).

¹⁷ See Heibonsha Daihyakkajiten (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984; 16 vols).

¹⁸ For an example of the type of text we have in mind, and for further illustrations of compatible reading exercises, see Hisaaki Yamanouchi and Graham Law Eigo VI: Advanced Reading Skills (Tokyo: University of the Air Foundation, 1989), a reading skills text based on an anthology of literary extracts.

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