The E-Job 100 Project: CALL for Increasing Motivation of English Learning in Japan

Akiyoshi Suzuki*, Teresa Kuwamura**

*Faculty of Liberal Arts, Osaka Sangyo University, 3-1-1 Nakagaito, Daito-shi, Osaka 574-8530, Japan
suzuki@las.osaka-sandai.ac.jp

**Graduate School of Humanities and Sciences, Nara Women’s University, Kitauoyahigashimachi, Nara-shi, Nara 630-8506, Japan
teresaldeng@hotmail.com

To increase the motivation of Japanese students in learning English, by applying Carl Rogers’ educational theory “student-centered education,” we have started the “E-Job 100” project on the internet (http://www.las.osaka-sandai.ac.jp/asuzuki/ejob100/e-job100.top.html) with support from NTT communications. Our website contains videos that show how people of various occupations read, write, listen, and speak English at their workplaces. In addition, students can access English documents that are used in real work environment. Students are able to play different roles by choosing their favorite occupations and practice their English in different situations. In this way, students are motivated and easily understand why they need to study English. The following is the results from the questionnaires for this project. It shows this project has good effect in increasing students’ motivation to learn.

1. Introduction

Following the advancement of the Internet and multimedia, various high quality CALL software has emerged. However, at least in Japan, good CALL software and E-Learning system are still just the gold mine that remains unexcavated. Many college students tend to avoid learning English. There are several reasons. One of the main reasons is that students believe they do not need English. Even some teachers feel the same way.

Many college students in Japan need to learn, first of all, why they need to learn English before they start learning English. We truly believe that the solution is in CALL education. “E-Job 100” that is based on Carl Rogers’ educational theory is one of its embodiments. Our purpose is to create a bridge between students and a good existing CALL system. Our focus is on how to motivate college students in Japan in learning English.

2. Background

One of the problems in English education for college students in Japan is the low motivation and academic ability (See Table 1).

Table 1: Problems of English education in college in Japan (Committee of the Survey. 2003. 787 correspondents. Multiple answers allowed.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Ratio of Respondents</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Low motivation and academic ability of students</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Skills of teacher</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Excessively high expectations on English education</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) National support of foreign language education</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Curriculum</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
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Over 50% of the students have already lost their motivation to learn before entering into college (See Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: “Are you interested in learning English?”
(Curriculum Research Center. 2005. Correspondents: 30,000 seniors in high school in Japan)
On the other hand, it is also true that over 80% of Japanese students think that learning English is important. (See Fig. 2.)

![Bar chart showing percentages of students' views on the importance of learning English.]

Fig. 2: “Is learning English important for Japanese?” (Curriculum Research Center. 2003. Correspondents: 243,000)

Many Japanese students know the importance of English in Japan. However, many students think that English is useless for them at the same time. These lead us to a view that students think English has something to do with Japanese but it is none of their personal business.

3. The Reason of Low Motivation

This situation derives from Japanese social condition. Many Japanese do not need English in their daily life. However, none of the Japanese have done research in various occupations in detail to find out if English is needed or not. In addition, college students in Japan cannot accurately comprehend the real work environment because of lacking in information. Therefore, even when teachers tell their students that they need English after they enter the job market, many of the students tend to think that it is none of their business. Furthermore, in Japan, social norm has become dysfunctional (cf. Kuwamura). Various pathologies in education have appeared; for example, more and more students cannot find out value of study or future goal. Furthermore, some students are becoming antisocial because they hold bad feelings such as abjection and feeling of inferiority toward society. Those reasons above have contributed lacking of learning motivation of students.

We have to pay attention to not only students’ ability and motivation, but also independence of each student and their realization of adequacy. When we look into various educational theories, Carl Rogers’ educational theory and CALL program become the best solution.

4. Rogers’ “Student-Centered Education” and CALL

Regarding Rogers’ educational theory, Dörnyei, one of the authorities in English education motivation study, admits its effectiveness.

Rogers is the first person who insisted that a teacher should be a facilitator. The facilitator does not boost up students’ motivation (e.g. Warschauer) nor is at the mercy of their interest, but increases it. Understanding and sharing students’ inner worlds from their viewpoints, the facilitator positively regards them, fulfills their inner worlds, comprehends their interests, accesses their developmental stages, and thinks up suitable ways of education for each of the students. The facilitator is the one who increases the meaning of education in students’ mind and shapes the future direction for them. The facilitator supports students to exert their potentiality of personal fulfillment by themselves and facilitates their perfection of human character and self-independence.

Rogers (1995) says, “the students who are in real contact with life problems wish to learn, want to grow, seek to find out, hope to master, desire to create” (289). By this way, students would be self-motivated and self-responsible to learn (cf. Brophy, Gribbs, Krapp, Schiefele).

Hence, we came up with “E-Job 100.” “E-job 100” is a learning system on the web in which the video of the actual scene where Japanese of various occupations use English. Students can choose their favorite jobs and learn English by experiencing the actual scene.

5. E-Job 100

95% of labor population in Japan works in 504 kinds of jobs. We have finished researching around 150 kinds of jobs to find out whether they need English or not. The answer is that all the occupations except tax accountant require Japanese to use English now. Most of Japanese now need English. In addition, we asked people in different occupation if they need, when, how, what level, how often, for what they use English.

According to the answers to our questions, we went to each job site and shot a video of the real work environment for a day with the scene where English is used. We have edited the video into the scene of work contents and the scene of each skill for about two minutes. In addition, we have obtained the original documents that are used in their daily tasks as the learners’ educational materials. We have made the video and the documents available to people on the web (See Fig. 3 to 5).
We have been creating contents of 100 kinds of jobs. That is why we call this project as “E-Job 100.” “E-Job 100” can be used as a reference for class, for example, a teacher gives students task, such as presentation, conversation with customer and client. Students choose their favorite job and complete tasks with learning English and its reason and meaning. Teacher also can use it as career education, an introduction to their English classes, the student’s target-setting in the future, ESP, and so on.

6. Effect and Conclusion

Common answers to the questionnaire given in 2007 (78 correspondents) before students use “E-Job 100” were “I hope I can get the credits very easily,” “I don’t expect anything,” “I don’t like English.” On the other hand, common answers to the questionnaire in the same after the students used “E-Job 100,” were “I realized we need English,” “I realized the truth,” “I need English for my future,” and “I am interested in English.” The FD questionnaire in 2007 (74 correspondents) showed that 97.2% answered “easily comprehensible,” 90.4% “Predigested,” and 90.2% “Interested in this class.” In addition, when we asked the students in the second class in 2006 whether they wanted to give a presentation, only 5 students of 72 students wanted it. In the latest class, all but five of 72 students had little hesitation of giving a presentation.

These results have led us to a conclusion that CALL education that is “not persuasion but showing the fact” by a facilitator in Rogers’ theory is effective to students who lost motivation for learning English in Japan.

References