

日本の英語教育における観光英語教育の必要性

山中マーガレット, 吉水淑雄, 安藤義久

文化創造学部文化創造学科文化創造学専攻

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The Need for Tourism English Tuition within English Education in Japan

Department of Cultural Development, Faculty of Cultural Development,
Gifu Women's University, 80 Taromaru, Gifu, Japan (〒501-2592)

YAMANAKA Margaret, YOSHIMIZU Yoshio and ANDO Yoshihisa

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要 旨

この論文では、英語教育における観光英語の有効性を主に二つの観点から議論した。第一章で、最近の日本の英語教育における変化の兆しを述べた後、第二章では、ESP (English for Specific Purposes) の一つの分野として観光英語が必要であることについて、旅行代理店の行う業務と英語の関係から考えることにした。まず、旅行代理店の業務に関する作業手順に観光英語の必要性を指摘した。特に観光ビジネスが多様化する中、個々の顧客のニーズを満たしていくためには、旅行代理店はTIM (Travel Information Manual) やOAG (Official Airlines Guides) 等の英文資料から、最新情報を取り入れる必要があることを示した。第三章では、従来の英米文学作品の多くが、旅行記を中心にした観光英語にその起源があることを明らかにした。次に、従来の英米文学作品と、旅行記など観光英語に基づく作品の両方を学生に読ませた場合、観光英語を学習した場合の方が、習熟度や学生が抱く興味等の点から、大変良い結果が出ていることが分かった。

以上のことから、大学の英文学科等に観光英語を導入する利点が大いにあるという結論に達した。

I. Introduction

English has been taught in Japan for over 130 years, yet never before has the need for specified English tuition been so strong. Up until recently, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has often meant the teaching of English for trade

or international business (Business English). However, with the influx of foreign teachers and other short-term workers, the medical industry is realizing a need for specific Nursing English and Medical English tuition. Now the government is putting a lot of effort into its tourism advertising. This requires specific knowledge in jargon and

expressions used in the tourist industry. This means that there is now a need for specific Tourism English as well.

At the same time as these needs for English for specific purposes has been growing, English education in Japan has also seen a change in the standards required of English teachers. For example, in 2003 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) set up an Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities, and advised universities to conduct more classes in English, regardless of whether the professor was a native speaker of English or not.

In March 2003, the then Minister of Education, Ms Toyama Atsuko, said that “For children living in the 21st century, it is essential for them to acquire communication abilities in English as a common international language.” Therefore, while universities made endeavors to improve the English ability of its staff and students, many prefectures throughout Japan advised Junior and Senior High School teachers to acquire a level of 730 or above on the TOEIC test. Also, starting with the 2002 school year, grants were given to certain high schools for specific use on extra English classes or specific theme based English Education. These schools were known as Super English High Schools (SELHi). In Primary Schools, English classes, under the nomenclature of “International Understanding”, began as early as 1987, culminating in English in all schools from 4th Grade as of 2008.

Changes also appeared in the format of the Centre Shiken English test, including a Listening Section, and a modified Reading Section which included passages taken from tourist guidebooks, and other sources not used in the Centre Shiken

test before. This meant that, at all levels, a much broader and deeper level of English understanding was required of students, and, due to their positions as mentors, teachers of those students. It is because of these changes that the authors wish to question the possible role of Tourism English in a curriculum focused at not only possible students of tourism but also future educators.

II. The Need for Tourism English as an E. S. P. Subject

Travel Agencies handle tours to overseas destinations as part of their daily routine. Students wishing to enter the Tourism Industry must know the jargon of that industry in order to be competent at work.

A travel agency can sell tours to overseas countries in three ways:

a) Individual travel service: where the customer requests airline tickets to, and accommodation at, a certain destination. Because the travel company acts as a representative on behalf of the airline and the hotel in making these arrangements, the tour company is generally called a Travel Agent.

b) Packaged tour deals: where the tour company prepares a trip, organizes transport, books hotels and sightseeing tours, and then advertises the trip at a pre-determined price.

c) Group bookings: where the sales representative visits the client, and plans are made after discussions as to where the group would like to go, how long they would like to go for, what they would like to do at their destination, and whether a tour conductor is required, and so on. These tours are usually of 10 or more participants, and the itinerary is made up to fit the group’s needs exclusively.

While individual travel services are simply a matter of booking specific flights or hotels requested by the client, packaged tour deals and group bookings are inclusive tours requiring a highly detailed schedule, which will include arrangements for day tours and transportation between destinations with the selected country (or countries) of the tour. Furthermore, while packaged tour deals are usually prepared by the head office of the travel company, group bookings require staff at the branch office to handle all arrangements after discussions with the client.

Whether packaged or arranged later, a tour follows the following 5 steps: - ① to gather information about the destination; ② to draw up a tentative itinerary (however, if it is a highly frequented destination, this sequence will change to ① itinerary, then ② detailed information research); ③ to reserve flights and hotel rooms, ④ to estimate the total cost of the tour, and ⑤ to determine a selling price for the tour commodity. Each step, of course, needs specialized knowledge and experience to execute speedily. Needless to say, competency in English is essential.

Generally speaking, this 5-step process is conducted by just one person. Packaged tour deals to overseas destinations are often compiled by staff at head-quarters who will invariably be proficient at English. However, if the tour is to be arranged according to a specific client's wishes, the sales representative and other local staff can only complete the tour if they have sufficient ability in English.

In order for the local branch office to fulfill the needs of the client who wishes to order an overseas trip, there are basically three areas where English is needed. One is an ability to read guides on or information about a specific destination.

The language will include vocabulary describing the local history and culture of the area as well as major attractions. Although there is now a lot of information available in Japanese, these “guide books” and internet sites tend to centre on places often frequented by the average Japanese tourist. However, there are occasions when a seasoned traveler will yearn to go to a lesser known destination, perhaps one he saw in a foreign magazine while on a previous trip. In this case, the only information available to the travel agent will be in English. Without ability in English, the staff will not be able to give the client sufficient information about the destination, nor will they be able to make contact with agencies at the destination so that the client can enjoy a fulfilling experience.

One more area where English is needed is in reading T. I. M. (Travel Information Manual), a monthly magazine-type manual which describes the passport and visa requirements, health requirements, airport tax, customs limitations, and currency regulations of every country in the world. T. I. M. is produced by the International Air Transport Association (Netherlands). It is not translated into any other language, and so all travel agents in Japan must be able to read the necessary articles.

Perhaps the first hurdle a Japanese Travel Agent will face is the name of the countries listed alphabetically. For example, England (イギリス) does not stand alone, but is part of the United Kingdom (U. K.), Holland (オランダ) is under Netherlands, and Tahiti (タヒチ) is listed under French Polynesia. Japanese staff are sometimes confused by the fact that Guam can be found under “Guam” because it is one of five recognized U. S. territories, yet the equally

popular nearby Saipan can only be found under “North Mariana Islands”.

The language used in T. I. M. is, however, repetitive and once the specific terminology is remembered, it can be relatively easy to read. The content, however, can be daunting without any background knowledge of the area where the client wishes to travel. For example, in the Passport section of France, (TIM Sept. 2010, pp. 157–8), there is a “Warning: For passengers arriving/departing Geneva (GVA) and Basle/Mulhouse/Freiburg (BSL).” Geneva, although in Switzerland, is in close proximity to Mt. Blanc. Therefore, clients wishing to go climbing or skiing in France can easily fly into Geneva. However, as the warning section explains, Geneva Airport only has an exit in Switzerland, requiring passengers traveling to France to carry valid documentation for both France and Switzerland. The Swiss City of Basle, on the other hand, has suburbs in France and Germany, and its airport has exits in both France and Switzerland. A client interested in visiting the automobile and train museums nearby, in France, needs to be told why they are flying to a Swiss airport, as well as a warning not to exit via the Swiss exit unless they have appropriate, additional documentation.

The reading of number limitations also poses a problem for Japanese staff. Where Japanese has 「〇〇歳以上」 inclusive of the age, and 「〇〇歳未満」 not including the age, English will usually specify whether or not the age is included or not. For example, in New Zealand, “children until/incl. 11 years” are exempt from paying airport tax (TIM Sept. 2010, p. 303). “Until/incl.” refers to “up to and including the age of 11” or 「12歳未満」. These differences between English and Japanese may cause the client embarrassment

or, on occasion, major trouble at their destination, if the Japanese travel agent does not have the necessary ability in reading and understanding such regulations.

Once sufficient information is known about the destination, the staff need to make up a tentative itinerary. Again, without adequate knowledge of English, the staff will not even be able to compile an itinerary. One book necessary at this stage is the Official Airlines Guide OAG Flight Guide (O. A. G.), a monthly magazine put out by UBM Aviation, containing the flight schedule for regular flights all over the world. Like T. I. M., this flight guide is only in English, although there are pages in the front of the guide explaining, in 6 languages, how to use the guide and read the timetable. Cities of departure are listed in alphabetical order, and each table contains columns that give information for days on which flights are scheduled, validity limitations (if any during the month of publication), departure time, departure airport code and terminal number, arrival time, arrival airport code and terminal number, airline code and flight number, number of stops, aircraft code, and cabin code. English being the language of this publication, days of the week are, for instance, abbreviated to the first letter of the day; M standing for Monday, and so on. Although departure and arrival times are given as local times at each respective airport, the time written beside the destination is calculated as a time difference from Greenwich Mean Time. Unfortunately for the Japanese travel agent, many countries incorporate daylight saving time, while some countries have more than one time zone. At the time of changeover to and from daylight saving time (usually late spring and early autumn), the OAG can be twice its already

thick 4 1/2cms. Furthermore, clients traveling at this time of year need to be instructed of the time changes.

Similar to the country names in T. I. M., the names of cities recorded in OAG also cause confusion for the Japanese travel agent. For example, ベネチア[benechia] in Japanese is “Venezia” in Italian, and “Venice” in English. Similarly, ウィーン[ui-n] in Japanese is “Wien” in German, and “Vienna” in English. Cities in China also pose problems because, having Chinese characters, Japanese tend to read them using the Japanese pronunciation system. English, on the other hand, uses the Chinese Pinyin pronunciation system. Therefore, the popular destination of 広州, pronounced コウシュウ[koushuu] in Japanese, is written as “Guangzhou” in English. Likewise, 北京, pronounced ペキン[pekin] in Japanese, is written as “Beijing” in English, and 西安, pronounced セイアン[seian] in Japanese, is written as “Xian” in English.

Once the travel agent has become accustomed to the OAG, the next hurdle is dealing with airlines to make flight bookings, hotels to make accommodation reservations, and finally to deal with smaller travel agents and sightseeing tour operators at the destination to book tours and private tour guides. At this stage, the Japanese travel agent needs to have not only reading skills, but writing and speaking skills as well, because correspondence will all be done in English, and should there be international phone calls made, the conversations will also be in English. Furthermore, the jargon used here will not only be specific to the tourism industry, but will also incorporate general expressions of politeness, inquiry, appreciation, and so on.

In this way, the tuition of Tourism English, taught as an ESP (English for Special Purposes) subject is essential to those who wish to work in the tourism industry. However, with the influx of people preferring to travel alone or in small groups of friends, rather than accepting the inflexible packaged tour, we can say that Tourism English is indeed necessary for anyone wishing to go overseas, or wanting to communicate with people from overseas traveling within Japan.

III. Tourism as Part of the English Literature Curriculum

In the curriculum of most universities offering degrees in English Language and Literature, or degrees which include teaching diplomas, there is generally a proliferation of English literature subjects covering the works of Shakespeare, Emily Bronte, D. H. Lawrence, J. D. Salinger, Nathaniel Hawthorne, or Thomas Hardy, to give just a small sample. However, if one looks at the history of English Literature and the novel, one will find that the novel owes its beginning to Travel Literature. The works of Homer and Chaucer show us that documenting a journey has long been an important part of “writing”. Later, as man traveled further afield, and readers increased their thirst for more tales of abroad, simple day to day travelogues developed into sometimes flamboyant stories. Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift were instrumental in developing the novel.

However, travel accounts were not only linked to romanticized falsifications. Travel articles also honed the skills of people who would later become England’s first newspaper journalists. Soon, the newspapers began to support serialized novels and accounts of trips to foreign lands.

Travel literature also influenced other sectors, such as geographers and cartographers, who had an immense thirst for knowledge of the world beyond England. Some voyages were even accompanied by botanists, mathematicians, and draftsmen, who would record the new lands, their positions, landscape, flora and fauna, and their inhabitants. In this way, travel literature contributed much to early science.

It is for these reasons that the wealth of Travel Literature needs to be reevaluated. Its use in the English class room has been greatly underestimated. Unfortunately, although there are many English Departments that offer many English literature classes, there are not many that give students the chance to learn Tourism English, or English classes focusing on some aspect of travel or tourism. Travel Literature, however, can become a very useful tool if students want to learn basic English skills, as will be shown here.

One of the authors teaches an English Literature class to English Majors at N University. Before the semester, the teacher decided to choose textbooks from Oxford Bookworms Library, as many of the books in this series are adaptations from original major book titles. Furthermore, they are organized in seven grades or ability levels, allowing students of mixed ability classes to choose a book suitable to their individual level of English understanding. Two travel books were selected for class use. They were *The Coldest Place on Earth* (level 1) by Tim Vicary and *Gulliver's Travels* (level 2) by Jonathan Swift. Other books also chosen for class reading were novels by Poe and O'Henry. Before class, the students were required to read a designated part of the textbook and write a book report on it for homework. In each class, they were given a quiz

or had to make a summary of what they had read at home. In addition, the students were required to read at least 10 more books at home and hand in reports on them before the end of the semester.

A preliminary survey, asking questions about the literature course and questions about studying English in general, was conducted recently on the 50 freshmen and sophomores attending the above-mentioned literature class. It has been determined that, although the students are English Majors, they do not have very high levels of English proficiency. For example, most of the students have TOEIC scores ranging from 350 to 400, with higher marks received in the listening section than in the reading section. In the survey, about 70% of the students answered that they want to develop "reading" and "vocabulary" most from among the four English-language skills. It is, however, very difficult for students at this level to read English Literature books in the original. The vocabulary and the grammatical constructions can be far beyond their comprehension. It is better for them, therefore, to start with readers written in simple English. This is why the teacher decided to choose textbooks from the Oxford Bookworms Library, as opposed to longer, more difficult originals.

During the semester, it was found that a small percentage, approximately one-fifth, of the students lost sight of the plot of the novels and they consequently got bad marks for quizzes or compiled strange summaries of the stories they had read. Some students forgot the plot of the story and ceased to read the novel. When these students were asked the reason why they had stopped reading the novel or had trouble following the plot, some of the students replied that they preferred reading essays to novels. They

explained that they had only read short essays in English at high school, and were not accustomed to reading novels. Similar results occurred with the books that students read and made reports of at home.

On the other hand, in the case of reading books based on travel experiences, most of the students never lost sight of the plot of the story, and students tended to get better marks at comprehension quizzes. In fact, the average grades attained for travel book assignments and quizzes were up to 20 points better than those for novels. What has made such a marked difference? The students surveyed explained that travel stories are easier to read than novels, as the plots are usually shorter than and not as complicated as those in novels. Stories based on travel experiences are also seen to be more interesting.

According to the survey, more than 60% of the students said that they want to read “novels”. However, it must be remembered that what they mean by “novels” is not Classical Literature, the preferred Literature Class content of most Japanese universities. Students say that classical novels are too difficult for them, and there are too many words that they do not know. They also say that the stories seem to be rather old fashioned. When asked what genres of novels they would prefer to read, approximately half of the surveyed students said that they want to read easy modern novels while about 40% said they want to read travel stories because they are “very concrete and informative”.

Judging from the marks achieved by the students, and the results of the survey asking students their opinion about reading English literature, it can be concluded that teaching

English with a distinct lean to tourism can greatly motivate the students to learn basic English skills, and can therefore become a very useful tool to be used in the English classroom.

IV. In Conclusion

This paper has looked at Tourism English from the viewpoint of ESP for the Tourism Industry, and tourism based learning in the form of Travel Literature. By looking at both of these aspects, it has become clear that by learning these two facets, students will go away with a better ability in general English, as well as a deeper understanding of specialized English, not to mention the increased motivation that comes from learning about foreign countries that they may very well have a chance to visit in the not-too-distant future.

Although the survey conducted was of limited subjects, the results indicate that the increased motivation of reading “interesting” travel stories, and the more direct style of English, are helping students to learn and retain more useful English expressions. The authors plan to improve on this preliminary survey, hoping to announce the results of a wider, large-scale survey in the future. However, even in its immature state, the survey shows promisingly that Travel Literature, in its capacity as the forerunner of the novel and an influence on the birth of the newspaper, can be used as a broad tool for learning science, history, and journalism, as well as the culture of a foreign land.

The English needs of the professional run far beyond the general English Conversation classroom, and also cannot be restricted to the general Literature classroom. Tourism English

as a specified subject is, of course, essential, although it can be, and indeed should be enhanced by the broader, equally valuable, subject of Travel Literature.

Furthermore, similar to the situation in the university classroom, the primary school English classroom is often enhanced by talking about, or meeting with people from other lands. In these cases, not only does the non-English specialist primary teacher have to be able to converse with the foreign visitor, but she must also be able to instruct her students on the manners and customs behind the language of the visitor. For example, prior to and during the 2005 World Expo in Aichi, children were seen blatantly asking foreigners for personal information and signatures. This type of *faux pas* can be eradicated if the teacher has learnt appropriate terms and expressions of politeness, which is naturally a part of the hospitality field. Needless to say, Tourism English should therefore be a necessary part of primary and secondary education, as well as tertiary education in Japan.

Finally, as Japan has set itself to becoming a major tourist destination for the foreign population, and the young of today can more than ever before expect to make easy contact with people from abroad, it is the conviction of the authors that Tourism English and Travel Literature should also be taught to students wishing to become educators, as these people will have the role of improving the situation for our youth in the future.

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