Chapter One

Introduction

1.1   General overview

In 2003, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), issued a document titled, Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities . It set the goal of English education in senior high school as students conducting normal communication with regard to topics, for example, relating to daily life. To accomplish this goal, MEXT designated a total of 100 schools as Super English Language High Schools (SELHi), which were supposed to promote innovative English education. At the same time, it required English teachers to improve their English skills and teaching abilities in order to conduct classes to cultivate communication abilities through the repetition of activities making use of English.

The Action Plan by MEXT is epoch-making because it has practically shown the goal of English education in high school, and the requirements for English teachers.   It does not, however, establish the procedures to achieve these goals. Actually, it encourages each school and teacher to implement practical research for promoting approaches to improve English education.

Therefore, the current study attempts to follow the ministry's directives by developing a comprehensive model to improve English II lessons in high school from the viewpoint of teacher adaptability, input-intake mechanism and learner autonomy.

This paper mainly consists of five chapters.   Chapter one will briefly introduce the background and purpose of this research.   Chapter two will try to establish three conceptual frameworks for the research in terms of teacher adaptability, input-intake mechanism, and learner autonomy.   The procedures for the actual research will be described in chapter three and the results in chapter four, respectively.   Chapter five will consider the meaning and applications of the results in light of other relevant research   and will conclude by noting the limitations and suggesting further

improvements.

1.2   Background to the study

This section describes the background to the study; firstly the traditional grammar-translation method, secondly recent practices of English lessons in senior high school, and lastly the personal reflections on my teaching career, which have provided the motivation and context for my research.

1.2.1   Grammar-translation method

The grammar-translation method has been one of the most popular methods used in Japanese high schools (Yoneyama, 2003).   It has features such as translation of the text from the foreign language into the mother tongue, explanation of unfamiliar words and grammatical rules by a teacher, and so on.

Although the grammar-translation method has been widely accepted in Japan, it has been also receiving deep-rooted criticisms.   The typical one is that the grammar-translation method lacks opportunities in developing communicative competence in the target language because it focuses on interpretation of written texts. Another criticism is that grammar-translation lessons tend to be monotonous and boring to students because they focus on explanation and interpretation of the material, and do not use much time for practical activities of speaking and listening.

In spite of these criticisms, the grammar-translation method is still used in English lessons in Japan.   However, the movements to change this traditional method are emerging nowadays.

1.2.2   New approaches of English lessons in senior high school.

Saito (1996) showed how to shift the grammar-translation method into the

direct-reading method.   He first illustrated ways to improve the grammar-translation lessons, and then demonstrated the procedures to change it into more communicative approach.   Saito (2003) and Kanatani (2002) further introduced the practical tasks that teachers could use even in the grammar-translation lessons, such as various types of games, oral reading practices, and so on.

Suzuki (2002) proposed the way to improve grammar-translation lessons more systematically in his round-reading method.   He arranged various tasks, such as oral reading and fill-in-the-blank activities in nine rounds.   He proved that the round-reading method enabled students to understand the materials more easily than the grammar-translation method.

Kanatani (2004) challenged the grammar-translation method more drastically with his Translation-in-First method.   It is similar with Suzuki s round-reading method in that it uses various activities in nine rounds, but the big difference is that it gives students the translation before the lesson.   He insisted that teachers should utilize the spare time by eliminating the process of translation in the lesson, for more practical, communicative activities.   By showing a lot of practices, he tried to prove that his method is more efficient for language teaching than the grammar-translation method.

These methods, along with information gleaned from SELHi reports, have influenced my own teaching and this research significantly, as will be described in the next section.

1.2.3   Personal reflections on my teaching career

I have been teaching English at high school for thirteen years.   For a few years at the beginning, I did not know how to do the lesson at all, so I tried various teaching techniques that looked useful to me at that time, participating in workshops and looked for articles and magazines.

Four years passed.   I moved to the next school, and taught there for seven years. During this period, I kept improving my lessons, by participating to seminars and trying

the new teaching methods that I learned.   I also began to realize the importance of the cooperation with colleagues, the annual schedule and home study.   I gradually learned how to organize the lesson.   I could sense my personal growth as a teacher throughout this period.

From the tenth year in my teaching career, however, I sometimes felt awkward about my lessons.   At first sight, students seemed to be actively participating in my lesson, and I did not sense any big problems.   Nevertheless, I somehow felt that the lessons were monotonous, and wondered whether I did a good lesson or not.   This was partly because the basic procedure of my lesson began to be fixed; I just repeated what I thought was successful in the past experience, and partly because I did not have any means to analyze my lessons objectively and theoretically.   I came to realize that I need to reconsider how to appreciate and evaluate my own lessons.

1.3   Purpose of the Study

This research aims at a comprehensive improvement in the planning, preparation, and presentation in my English II lessons.   This is important because English II course forms the basis of all further communicative lessons in high school.   This study will use an action research methodology in order to better appreciate and understand the learners interests, motivations, and their progressions towards autonomy.   Specifically, this study will investigate:

1.   How to increase the amount of input/intake
2.   How to choose and arrange tasks in the lesson appropriately
3.   How to reconcile theory with practice

This will be done by conducting questionnaires on the lessons and students problems in studying English, observing lessons with videos and reflective journals, and analyzing the results both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Chapter Two

Conceptual Frameworks

2.1   Introduction

This chapter is intended to describe and explain three conceptual frameworks used in this thesis: teacher adaptability, input-intake mechanism and learner autonomy. Teacher adaptability in section 2.2 will attempt to integrate these frameworks into a coherent research model.   The input-intake mechanism in section 2.3 will explain how language is learned, while learner autonomy in section 2.4 will focus on how learners learn language.   The comprehensive model to unify the three conceptual frameworks will be shown in section 2.5.

2.2   Teacher adaptability

When teachers want to improve their lessons, the first thing that they can do is to look for the better practices of other teachers, such as the SELHi practices.   They can read books and reports, search the internet and so on.   However, this often results in failure because such better practices do not suit their classes.   That is why teachers have to watch and reflect upon their lessons, including the materials they select, consider the needs of their students, and monitor the resources in their classroom and other factors.   Then, they may try to adapt themselves according to the activities and tasks that make up their lesson. Learning Strategy Study Group of Japan Association of College English Teachers (2005) introduces various methods to collect data about the lessons.   They are questionnaires, observations, interviews, journals, portfolios, and so on.   Among them, action research is one of the most systematic and practical methods for teacher adaptability.

2.2.1   What is action research?

Action research refers to teacher-initiated classroom investigation which seeks to increase the teacher s understanding of classroom teaching and learning, and to bring about change in classroom practices.   Action research typically involves small-scale investigative projects in the teacher s own classroom, and consists of a number of phases, which often recur in cycles: planning, action, observation, and reflection. (Richards & Lockhart 1994, p.12)

2.2.2   Why is action research necessary?

Burns (1999) illustrates the necessity of action research, with the episode of a teacher who successfully improved her lesson with the help of action research.   She added:

 & (the teacher) developed a critical perspective on her practice and observed systematically various influential factors operating in her classroom by using action research as a powerful medium of reflection ... It is rather to propose that reflective analysis of one s own teaching develops a greater understanding of the dynamics of classroom practice and leads to curriculum change that enhances learning outcomes for students.
(1999, p.12)

Burns concluded that:

 &action research offers a valuable opportunity for teachers to be involved in research which is felt to be relevant, as it is grounded in the social context of the classroom and the teacher institution, and focuses directly on issues and concerns which are significant in daily teaching practice. (1999, p.17)

2.2.3   Procedures of action research

Burns (1999) claimed that the four major steps in the action research process, planning, action, observation and reflection, are too prescriptive and systematic, and do not allow researchers to accommodate spontaneous, creative episodes.   To solve these problems, she developed eleven phases of action research, which will be also adopted in

this thesis.

1. Exploring: This phase is a starting point for the undertaking of some initial action. It includes documenting the general observation of the situation in order to clarify researchers understandings about the problem, and doing some reading of recent articles or books to obtain ideas for research.

2. Identifying: This phase is to refine the researchers ideas about the general focus area and to prepare for more systematic investigation. It includes recording and documenting observations on the research area in a broad way.

3. Planning: This phase is to develop a viable plan of action for gathering data, and to consider and select a range of appropriate research methods.

4. Collecting data: The procedures for collected data are developed and put into action in this phase.   Furthermore, the research area is deeply considered and if necessary expanded.

5. Analyzing / Reflecting: The data are analyzed using a systematic process of analysis and interpretation.   This phase is considered to be a combination of both analysis and reflection.

6. Hypothesizing / Speculating: Hypotheses or predictions are made for the further action, for example, to improve students learning.   They are based on the data collected so far, the analysis and the teacher/student reflections.

7. Intervening: This phase involves changing classroom approaches or practices according to the hypotheses and predictions.   Further experimenting and formal assessments are done, if necessary.

8. Observing: This phase involves observing the outcomes of the intervention and reflecting on its effectiveness.   A new set of teaching strategies and activities, and further data collection is implemented, if necessary.

9. Reporting: Activities, data collection and results of the research are discussed in this phase.   Verbalizing these activities clarifies the problems in the analyses and observations.

10. Writing: Researchers write up the research questions, strategies, the process of the research, and the analyses/results in this phase. Done well, this makes the research accessible to other teachers or researchers.

11. Presenting: This phase aims at ensuring that the research is presented to a wider audience through publication, presentations, workshops and other forms of information sharing.

2.2.4 Summary

This section has shown how action research encourages teachers to adapt themselves to the reality in the classroom. Based on the practical framework of action research, the following sections will propose two important theoretical frameworks: input-intake mechanism and learner autonomy.

2.3 Input-intake mechanism

This section aims at proposing the model to explain the mechanism of how input becomes intake. First, studies on input and intake will be reviewed. Second, advantages and disadvantages of each hypothesis will be discussed. Third, the concepts on input and intake used in this thesis will be defined.

2.3.1 Input hypothesis and natural approach

Krashen (1981) proposed the Input Hypothesis to explain the mechanism of second language acquisition. His hypothesis consists of five parts and they can be summarized as follows:

1. Language acquisition (an unconscious process developed through using language meaningfully) is different from language learning (consciously learning or discovering rules about a language) and language acquisition is the

only way competence in a second language occurs. (The acquisition/learning hypothesis)
2. Conscious learning operates only as a monitor or editor that checks or repairs the output of what has been acquired. (The monitor hypothesis)
3. Grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order and it does little good to try to learn them in another order. (The natural order hypothesis)
4. People acquire language best from messages that are just slightly beyond their current competence. (The input hypothesis)
5. The learner s emotional state can act as a filter that impedes or blocks input necessary to acquisition. (The affective filter hypothesis)

(English360, http://www.english360.com/glossary/)

Based on this hypothesis, Krashen and Terrell (1983) developed the Natural Approach. The features of this method were as follows:

1. Comprehensible input is presented in the target language, using techniques such as TPR, mime and gesture.

2. To decrease anxiety, learners start to talk when they are ready, and are allowed to use their native language.

3. Grammatical mistakes in learners utterances are not corrected, as the teacher is focusing on meaning rather than form.

2.3.2   Modification of Krashen s model

Input Hypothesis and Natural Approach provided the basic framework of language learning and acquisition in an EFL context, but met some criticisms. For example, Krashen, in his acquisition-learning hypothesis and the monitor hypothesis, claimed that language acquisition is done only in the unconscious level, but he did not clarify the distinction between what is conscious and what is unconscious. Thus, Krashen s model was further developed from the perspective of interaction, output, and noticing, respectively.

2.3.2.1 Interaction hypothesis

While Krashen (1981) claimed the necessity of the comprehensible input, Long (1981) argued that comprehensible input cannot be properly done without interaction and thus developed his Interaction Hypothesis according to the following rationales. First, when one does not understand what the other says in the second language, one is likely to ask its meaning. In this process, incomprehensible input becomes comprehensible. In short, interaction ensures comprehensible input. This sort of interaction is specifically called the negotiation of meaning by Gass (1997), Long (1996), and Pica (1994). Second, interaction can be hypothesis testing in that one can know whether what one says is grammatically correct or not from the reaction of the other. Furthermore, through the interaction, language learners have no choice but to create output, which is called pushed output and plays an important role in the hypothesis testing. The second and third rationales for the Interaction Hypothesis imply the importance of output in language learning, which will be discussed in detail in the next section.

2.3.2.2 Output hypothesis

Swain (1985) argued that Krashen s model did not explain some of the things she was observing in immersion programs in Canada. She found that many of her students made a lot of grammatical mistakes even after being exposed to plenty of comprehensible input. She hypothesized that comprehensible output as well as comprehensible input is indispensable for language acquisition. In her Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, she defined comprehensible output as an utterance that is precise, coherent, and appropriate. Her hypothesis showed a clear contrast with Krashen s input hypothesis in that it focused on the output, which was ignored by Krashen s model. She claimed that the effort to make the comprehensible output, in itself, contributes to language acquisition. Even if output is not comprehensible,

learners can get negative feedback, through which they can modify their output. They notice the gap between their output and comprehensible output, which also promotes language acquisition. Both the Interaction Hypothesis and the Output Hypothesis imply the importance of noticing in using language. This will be further discussed in the next section.

2.3.2.3   Noticing hypothesis

Schmidt (1990) challenged Krashen s acquisition-learning distinction even more drastically. First, he distinguished comprehensible input from intake. Intake refers to a portion of the input that learners attend to and take into short-term memory, which may be subsequently incorporated into interlanguage (a language independent of both the target language and the learner s L1) (Selinker 1972). In his Noticing Hypothesis, he proposed that input becomes intake only if learners notice grammatical features. This notion directly contradicted Krashen s idea that language acquisition is done unconsciously.

2.3.3   Experimental studies on each hypothesis

So far, four types of hypotheses on language learning were reviewed: Input hypothesis, Interaction hypothesis, Output hypothesis, and Noticing hypothesis. Lightbown and Spada (1999) discussed strengths and limitations of each hypothesis, quoting many cases of experimental studies. According to their analysis, comprehension-based programs, (supported by Input hypothesis), appear to be beneficial in the development of basic comprehension and communicative performance in the early stages of learning, but they may not be sufficient to get learners to continue developing their second language abilities to advanced levels. VanPatten and Cadierno (1993a) also demonstrated that instruction is apparently more beneficial when it is directed at how learners perceive and process input rather than when it is focused on

practice via output (1993a, p.240)

Lightbown and Spada (1999), on the other hand, pointed out that opportunities for learners to engage in conversational interactions in group and paired activities can lead to increased fluency and the ability to manage conversations in a second language, while it is less likely to be effective in regular second language classroom. This is because the teachers recasts may not be perceived by the learners as an attempt to correct their language form but rather as just another way of saying the same thing.

These experimental studies imply that input, interaction, output and noticing respectively have some importance in language learning though any hypothesis on language learning cannot be perfect. Teachers should rely on each hypothesis according to the differences in the students and their way of teaching.

2.3.4   Input-intake model in this thesis

In this thesis, the following model will be adopted so that there is a better possibility that input can effectively become intake. First, teachers should provide students with comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is input that is understandable to the learner at his or her level or just slightly above it. More input is not necessarily more comprehensible.

Second, teachers should give students the opportunity to interact with teachers and with each other because interaction can promote comprehensible input as Long points out in his Interaction Hypothesis.

Third, teachers should ensure the chance for students to produce the comprehensible output in the lesson. The output itself can develop students language ability. At the same time, teachers can correct students mistakes through their output.

Lastly, teachers should remove learners anxiety in language learning (Krashen s affective filter). This can encourage students to interact and make the output more smoothly, which ensures noticing by the students. Noticing in language learning, as Schmidt points out, enables the input to become the intake more effectively.

2.3.5   Summary

This section overviewed some relevant views of language acquisition. Krashen s affective-filter hypothesis and input hypothesis are central frameworks that inform this thesis.   However, noticing (as suggested by Schmidt) through interaction/negotiation of meaning (Long) and the production of comprehensible output (Swain) take significant roles as well.   They give learners the chance to produce the output and to receive the negative feedbacks.   At the same time, they make it possible for teachers to correct learners mistakes.   This comprehensive model will effectively improve learners input toward intake.   The next section will shift the focus on learners, specifically on how learners cope with language learning effectively.

2.4   Learner autonomy

So far we have seen the mechanism of language acquisition, especially how the input becomes intake in learning.

However, this mechanism alone is not enough for successful language learning, as the proverb goes; you can lead a horse to the water but you can t make him drink.   It also depends on how learners cope with their learning, in other words, whether or not they develop learner autonomy.

2.4.1   What is learner autonomy?

Holic (1981) defines learner autonomy as the ability to take charge of one s own learning .   Learner autonomy generally involves ideas such as encouraging students capacity to learn for themselves and awareness of their own learning styles, and discouraging students from relying on the teacher as the main source of knowledge (Macmillan Website (2002)).   According to a Wikipedia article of the same name, learner autonomy has been viewed as both a means to an end (learning a foreign

language) and an end in itself (making people autonomous learners).   In this research, I will focus primarily on the former viewpoint.   That is, learner autonomy is an essential means to the development of efficient and successful language learning.

2.4.2   Why is learner autonomy important?

It is obvious that each student has a different level of English ability, and thus needs a different approach to learn English.   There is no single best learning method - rather, teachers need to adjust and adapt a variety of best practices to meet the different needs of students while at the same time encouraging students to be responsible for their own language learning.   One thing that teachers can do for students is to encourage them to find their own way of learning.   Practically, teachers can adapt their instruction to individual differences so that students can learn English efficiently.

Furthermore, the concept of learner autonomy meets the original purpose of English Education in high school.   The Course of Study, issued by the MEXT, defines the purpose of foreign language education in high school as fostering the learners positive attitude toward learning by themselves .

2.4.3   How can learner autonomy be fostered?

Fostering learner autonomy requires some concrete methods or techniques, which include language learning strategies.   Various models of language learning strategies have been proposed by O Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (2001), Brown (2001), Dörnyei (2001) among others.

2.4.3.1 Learner autonomy from learners viewpoint

Learning Strategy Study Group of Japan Association of College English Teachers (hereinafter JACET-LSSG) (2005), based on the frameworks by O Malley and Chamot

(1990) and Oxford (2001), proposed four categories of language learning strategies. The first category is cognitive strategies, which are closely related with language learning activities. Examples of cognitive strategies are practicing words and phrases, using dictionaries and references, grouping and classifying learning materials, taking notes, summarizing, highlighting, visualizing and vocalizing. Each of the cognitive strategies helps learners understand the materials without the direct aid of teachers, which promotes language learning and learner autonomy.

The second is mnemonic strategies. They help learners to memorize new words and expressions, and to remember what they have learned. Examples of the mnemonic strategies are guessing the meaning of words from the context, rhyming, association and so on. These strategies ease learners burden to memorization and encourage learners to guess the meaning of unknown words from what they have already learned by themselves. Thus, they can promote learner autonomy.

The third is metacognitive strategies. They includes learners planning, selecting and prioritizing materials and issues, self-management, problem-identification, monitoring and evaluating their own learning, and predicting the topic. These metacognitive strategies encourage learners to reflect and improve their way of learning and thus promote learner autonomy.

The fourth is socio-affective strategies. They enable learners to ask questions to clarify, cooperate with each other, reinforce themselves, talk to themselves to ease anxiety, take their emotional temperature and to cultivate positive attitudes towards themselves and others. These strategies support autonomous learning from a learner s psychological perspective.

2.4.3.2   Learner autonomy from classroom viewpoint

Benson (2003), on the other hand, proposes five principles for fostering autonomy in the classroom. First, students should be actively involved in their own learning. Traditionally, teachers controlled students learning, but this should be avoided for

learner autonomy. However, this does not mean that teachers leave students as they are. Rather, teachers should help students control their way of learning. In short, both teachers and learners should be actively involved in the learning.

Second, teachers should provide a range of learning options and resources. For example, when students learn English grammar, teachers should give students the choice of both deductive and inductive ways of learning. Teachers can even encourage students to bring the material that they want to learn to the classroom.

Third teachers should offer choices and decision-making opportunities to students. In other words, teachers should be sensitive to what students require and what is trivial to students. For example, teachers can arrange desks and chairs according to the type of activities they use in the class, such as group work, walking-around activities and so on. Each time something has to be decided in the class, teachers should let students think of the options and listen to them. This will create the atmosphere where students try to think of their own learning, and thus promote learner autonomy.

Fourth, teachers should support the learners. When students are supposed to choose their way of learning, teachers should give them necessary information beforehand. For example, in the choice of deductive and inductive learning styles for grammar, teachers should explain both methods to students, including their experience and evaluation.

Fifth, teachers should encourage students reflection on their decision. This is especially important when students make mistakes or have been less successful as a result of their decisions. Through hypothesis-testing in the reflection, students learn why the mistake occurred, and gain confidence in their next decision.

2.4.3.3 Learner autonomy from teachers viewpoint

Dörnyei (2001), on the other hand, focused on how teachers motivate students for language learning, and proposed a comprehensive model of motivational strategies in language learning. They mainly consist of four stages. The first stage is to create the

desirable environment to motivate students.   Examples of the first stage include having a good relationship with learners, creating an enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom, and forming groups of learners with appropriate group norms.

The second stage is to motivate learners when they start learning. At this stage, teachers can illustrate the merit of language learning, let learners set the goal of language learning, provide learners with the resourceful curriculum and so on.

The third stage is to keep learners motivation.   At this stage, teachers can provide the attractive materials and tasks for learners, encourage learners positive attitudes towards learning, and create the environment that will nurture learner autonomy.

The last stage is to promote positive self-assessment.   At this stage, teachers can give learners various types of feedback on their achievement.   They can praise learners for their success of learning, and give them rewards, if necessary.

Based on these four stages, Dörnyei (2001) proposed 35 strategies to motivate learners in detail. However, in interest of space they will be omitted here.

2.4.3.4   Learner autonomy model in this thesis

This thesis will mainly depend on Benson s framework because the focus of this thesis is on the improvement in the classroom. Dörnyei s motivational strategies provide a lot of practical suggestions on learner autonomy, but the description is unnecessarily detailed and appears hard to implement in a regular classroom. The summary on learner autonomy by JACET-LSSG clarifies its theoretical aspects, but it is mainly based on the learner s viewpoint, and seems more difficult for teachers to control than the others.

2.4.4   Summary

JACET-LSSG (2005), Benson (2003) and Dörnyei (2001) tried to develop models to foster learner autonomy from the viewpoint of the learner, the classroom, and the

teacher viewpoint respectively. Their perspectives are different, but they try to describe the same thing: how learners cope with language learning effectively.

Learner autonomy seems difficult for teachers to control because it is mainly up to the learner. Still teachers can encourage learners to learn language effectively by introducing them to practical learning strategies.

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter has proposed the conceptual frameworks of this thesis, that is, teacher adaptability, the input-intake mechanism, and learner autonomy. Teacher adaptability is based on the action research method. Action research aims to offer practical procedures for planning, action, observation, and reflection so that teachers can improve their lessons. Action research will work as the implementing procedures on improving the lesson from the viewpoint of input-intake mechanism and learner autonomy.

The discussion on how input becomes intake has brought light to the importance of comprehensible input, interaction, output, and noticing, as well as affective filter, which is closely related with learner autonomy. The input-intake mechanism will work as the theoretical grounds upon which teachers rely when they choose the materials and tasks they will use in the lesson, and decide on the lesson procedures.

The concept of learner autonomy shows how learners cope with language learning effectively from the learners viewpoint. Learning strategies, the practical steps to realize learner autonomy, will theoretically support learners for what they should do for effective language learning. Teachers can encourage learners to utilize learning strategies.

The concept of learner autonomy is closely related to the input-intake mechanism in that it observes language learning from a different perspective. The input-intake mechanism focuses on the cognitive process of language learning, while learner autonomy rather explains learners attitudes toward effective language learning.

At the same time, it may discourage teachers to know that there is no single best learning method that is absolutely right for all learners because each learner and level is different. That also calls for the necessity of action research because the theories themselves cannot solve the problems in the classroom, and action research is the practical measure to fill the gap between the theories and the reality in the classroom.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1   Introduction

        This chapter explains the research procedures of this thesis, based on the conceptual frameworks in the previous chapter.   Preliminary investigations in section 3.2 are the data collection phase in Burn s framework.   The hypothesis phase in section 3.3 highlights twenty problems that the students have.   The plan of intervention in section 3.4 implements steps to solve these problems.

3.2   Preliminary investigations

        On March 2006, two preliminary investigations were conducted to clarify what kinds of problems the students had in studying English.   They were Benesse Study Support (BSS) in 3.2.1 and Student Impression of Teacher Style (SITS) in 3.2.2.

3.2.1   Preliminary investigation A: Benesse Study Support (BSS)

        The first questionnaire was for 280 students in the first grade.   The purpose was to understand the students environment and problems in studying English I.   The items in this questionnaire were taken from what is called Study Support , published by Benesse Corporation (BSS) (See Appendix A).

3.2.2   Preliminary investigation B: Student Impression of Teacher Style (SITS)

        Another questionnaire was done for 80 students in two classes of the first grade. The purpose of this second questionnaire was to collect students impressions regarding my teaching style in English I (SITS).   The students were asked about each activity

used in English I lessons from three perspectives: necessity, difficulty, and interest (See Appendix B).

3.3   Hypothesis

From the result of two preliminary investigations, twenty problems that students had in studying English were extracted.   A hypothesis was made that learners interest, motivation and autonomy will be improved by eliminating the twenty problems.

3.4   Plan of intervention

To eliminate the twenty problems extracted from the two preliminary investigations on March 2006, both qualitative and quantitative research was conducted.

3.4.1   Quantitative research

Quantitative research proceeded in three stages: pre-treatment, midway check, and post-treatment.   Pre- and post-treatments were implemented in April and July to see the improvement.

3.4.1.1 Pre-treatment: Study Problems 20 - Pre (Pre-SP20)

From the result of BSS and SITS, twenty problems that students had in studying English were extracted, which was the pre-treatment investigation (Pre-SP20) (See Appendix D).   The purpose of this questionnaire was to see how serious the target students in the second grade feel about the twenty problems extracted from the students in the first grade. It was performed for 115 students in the second grade about these twenty problems on five-point scale in April, as shown in Appendix E and F.   SP20 was counter-intuitive in that the higher a score is, the more serious a problem is.   This

was because the items in SP20 respect the students' original expressions in the preliminary investigations.

3.4.1.2 Midway check: Revised SITS

In the middle of the first semester, the investigation was conducted to get an idea of student reactions to tasks and teaching methods at the mid-way point in the course. This is the adapted version of SITS, done in March (Revised SITS) (See Appendix C).

3.4.1.3 Post-treatment: Study Problems 20 - Post (Post-SP20)

At the end of the first semester, in July, the post-treatment investigation was conducted, based on SP20 (Post-SP20) to see the improvement from April to July (See Appendix D).

3.4.1.4 Factor analysis

The results of pre- and post-treatment were analyzed statistically to extract the factors in the responses to the twenty problems.

3.4.2 Qualitative research

Three types of qualitative research were done to improve the twenty problems that the students had in English II lessons. They were videotaped sessions, reflective journal sessions, and class observation by a colleague.

3.4.2.1 Videotaped sessions

All the lessons for one class from April to July were continuously videotaped,

which was intended to decrease students sensitivity against being videotaped. The Video recorder was placed in different positions of the classroom to observe the lesson from different points of view. Only one tape in a week was analyzed in the reflective journal explained in the next section.

3.4.2.2   Reflective journal sessions

Based on the videotaped lessons, the reflective journal was kept in the form of web log (Teaching Journal: http://d.hatena.ne.jp/JCD00620/). The purpose was to observe the lesson and detect its problems. It included the description of the material, the timetable of each lesson, and personal comments/reflections (See Appendix L for a sample of reflective journal sessions).

3.4.2.3   Class observation by a colleague

One of the researcher s colleagues was invited to observe the lesson and give some comment. She wrote down the timetable of the lesson and her impression on the lesson. After the lesson, a discussion was done, based on the observations.

Chapter Four

Results

4.1   Results of preliminary investigations

The following results were obtained on two preliminary investigations: Benesse Study Support (BSS) and Student Impression of Teacher Style (SITS).

4.1.1   Results of BSS

Appendix G was the whole results of BSS.   Item 1-3, 8 showed that students had a habit to study English at home to a certain extent.   Item 3 specifically indicated that more than 80% of the students did the preparation for the lesson, and homework.   Item 8 said that more than half of the students translated the English textbook into Japanese for the lesson.

Item 3, 10 and 13, on the other hand revealed that a significant number of students did not do the review for the lesson.   Item 6 showed that more than 30% students felt anxious about English lessons.   Item 7 also indicated that about 20% students had some problem about methods, planning and results of their study.   These problems were reflected in SP20.

4.1.2   Results of SITS

Table 1 illustrates the average scores of the items in SITS (See Appendix H for more detailed results).   Item 4 Model slash-reading of the new passage showed the lowest scores on necessity, difficulty, and interest.   Item 10 Shadowing practice of the textbook also showed the low scores on necessity and interest.   Therefore, I omitted these activities in the English II lessons.   Item 14 Essay writing in the end of each lesson in the textbook and item 16 Workbook (for studying at home) showed the

highest score on difficulty, so I reflected on these problems in SP20.

Table 1

Average scores of the items in SITS

	Items of SITS	N	D	I
1	Reviewing the vocabulary by chorus reading, and columns and rows at the beginning of the lesson	4.2	3.1	3.7
2	Checking the new words and their derivations by columns and rows	4.4	3.6	3.5
3	Vocabulary test at the end of each lesson of the textbook.	4.7	3.9	2.5
4	Model slash-reading of the new passage	3.4	2.2	2.3
5	Answering students question on their preparation	4.6	2.9	2.8
6	Checking the meaning of each sentence by recasting	4.6	3.6	3.0
7	Lecture-style summary of expressions in the text	4.9	3.2	3.1
8	Oral-interpretation-like Questions and Answers of the textbook by columns and rows	4.3	3.8	2.9
9	Pair oral reading practice of the textbook	4.0	3.0	3.2
10	Shadowing practice of the textbook	3.9	4.0	2.8
11	Pair oral reading practice using the cloze-test-like handout (for consolidation)	4.0	4.0	3.0
12	Listening practice at the beginning and end of each lesson in the textbook	4.4	3.8	3.1
13	Explanation of the grammatical points and exercises at the end of each lesson	4.3	3.7	2.8
14	Essay writing in the end of each lesson in the textbook	4.3	4.4	2.7
15	Sentence memorization test & Endless re-test	4.4	4.0	2.5
16	Workbook (for studying at home)	4.3	4.4	2.4

Note: N, D, and I respectively, mean Necessity, Difficulty and Interest.

4.1.2.1 Necessity

Of the main sixteen activities in the English I lessons in the first grade, item 7

Lecture-style summary of expressions in the text showed the highest scores on necessity (4.9/5.0), followed by item 3 Vocabulary test at the end of each lesson of the textbook (4.7), item 5 Answering students question on their preparation (4.6), item 2 Checking the meaning of each sentence by recasting (4.6).

Item 4 Model slash-reading of the new passage , on the other hand, showed the lowest scores on necessity (3.4/5.0), followed by Item 10 Shadowing practice of the textbook (3.9), item 9 Pair oral reading practice of the textbook , item 11 Pair oral reading practice using the cloze-test-like handout (for consolidation) (4.0).

4.1.2.2 Difficulty

Item 14 Essay writing in the end of each lesson in the textbook showed the highest score the difficulty (4.4), followed by item 16 Workbook (for studying at home) (4.0), item 15 Sentence memorization test & Endless re-test (4.0), item 10 Shadowing practice of the textbook (4.0), and item 11 Pair oral reading practice using the cloze-test-like handout (for consolidation) (4.0).

Item 4 Model slash-reading of the new passage showed the lowest scores on difficulty (2.2), followed by item 5 Answering students question on their preparation (2.9), item 11 Pair oral reading practice of the textbook (3.0), and item 1 Reviewing the vocabulary by chorus reading, and columns and rows at the beginning of the lesson (3.1).

4.1.2.3 Interest

Item 1 Reviewing the vocabulary by chorus reading, and columns and rows at the beginning of the lesson showed the highest score on interest (3.7), followed by item 2 Checking the new words and their derivations by columns and rows (3.5), item 9 Pair oral reading practice of the textbook (3.2), and item 7 Lecture-style summary of expressions in the text (3.1).

Item 4 Model slash-reading of the new passage showed the lowest scores on interest (2.3), followed by item 16 Workbook (for studying at home) (2.4) and item 15 Sentence memorization test & Endless re-test (2.5), item 3 Vocabulary test at the end of each lesson of the textbook (2.5), and item 14 Essay writing in the end of each lesson in the textbook (2.7).

4.2 Results of quantitative research

The following results were obtained on quantitative research: pre-treatment Study Problems 20 (Pre-SP20), revised Student Impression of Teacher Style for midway check (Revised SITS) and post-treatment Study Problems 20 (Post-SP20).

4.2.1 Results of Pre-SP20 (pre-treatment)

Table 2 illustrates the average scores of the items in Pre- and Post-SP20 (See Appendix J for more detailed results). Of twenty problems that students had in studying English, which were extracted from the two preliminary investigations, item 19 I have too many assignments to prepare for term exams. was the most serious (4.2/5.0), followed by item 13 I do not review the lesson by myself (4.1), item 20 I do not review term exams (3.9), and item 4 I cannot carry out the plan / I cannot keep the plan. (3.9).

Item 12 I do not prepare for the lesson (2.2), on the other hand, was the least serious, followed by item 7 I do not know how to translate the sentences into Japanese (2.4), item 5 I cannot understand the content of the lesson (2.6), and item 6 I cannot concentrate on the lesson (2.7).

Table 2

Average scores of the items in Pre- and Post-SP20

	Items of SP20	April	July
1	I do not feel like studying English.	2.8	1.9
2	I do not know how to study English.	3.0	2.6
3	I cannot get good marks even if I study hard.	3.0	2.6
4	I cannot carry out the plan / I cannot keep the plan.	3.9	3.6
5	I cannot understand the content of the lesson.	2.6	1.8
6	I cannot concentrate on the lesson.	2.7	1.7
7	I do not know how to translate the sentences into Japanese.	2.4	2.1
8	I do not know how to study listening of English.	3.5	3.5
9	I do not know how to write English essays.	3.6	3.8
10	I do not know how to pronounce English words.	3.0	2.7
11	I do not prepare for quizzes in daily lessons.	2.8	2.5
12	I do not prepare for the lesson.	2.2	1.5
13	I do not review the lesson by myself.	4.1	3.4
14	I do not practice reading the passage orally.	3.8	3.1
15	I cannot memorize English vocabularies.	3.5	2.9
16	I do not know how to solve the passage-type entrance exam in the workbook.	3.3	3.1
17	I do not know how to solve the translation-type entrance exam in the workbook.	3.7	3.2
18	I do not know how to prepare for term exams.	3.5	2.9
19	I have too much assignment to prepare for term exams.	4.2	3.5
20	I do not review term exams.	3.9	3.9

Note: Higher scores mean that they are more serious to the students.

4.2.2   Results of Revised SITS (midway check)

Revised SITS on May 2006 showed the similar results as SITS on March 2006 except that there was no remarkably low-scored activity in the revised SITS.   The reason was that such activities had been already been eliminated from the lesson.

4.2.3   Results of Post-SP20 (post-treatment)

The comparison of the results between Pre-SP20 in April and Post-SP20 in July showed that item 6 I cannot concentrate on the lesson was improved most significantly (-1.0), followed by item 1 I do not feel like studying English (-0.9), item 5 I cannot understand the content of the lesson , item 12 I do not prepare for the lesson , item 13 I do not review the lesson by myself , and item 14 I do not practice reading the passage orally   (-0.7, respectively).

On the other hand, the scores of item 20 I do not review term exams and item 9 I do not know how to write English essays were worsened.   Item 8 I do not know how to study listening of English (-0.1) and item 17 I do not know how to solve the passage-type entrance exam in the workbook (-0.2) were also not improved significantly.

4.2.4   Result of factor analysis

Result scores in the questionnaires conducted on April and July 2006 were standardized respectively.   Each standardized score in April and July was combined together.   Based on this score, the factor analysis was performed using the Maximum Likelihood method.   Three factors were determined by a combination of the Kaiser/Guttman criterion (each characteristic value from the first factor to the fourth factor was 5.15, 2.34, 1.46, 1.42, and 1.03) and the scree plot criterion.   These three factors were rotated in a promax rotation.   Each factor loading was shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Result of the factor analysis

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1	0.53	0.12	-0.07
2	0.00	0.92	-0.10
3	-0.24	0.64	0.06
4	0.42	0.26	-0.07
5	0.30	0.29	0.12
6	0.36	0.07	0.02
7	0.17	0.22	0.17
8	-0.12	-0.14	0.51
9	-0.03	0.25	0.43
10	-0.02	0.10	0.34
11	0.58	-0.02	-0.17
12	0.66	-0.02	-0.35
13	0.50	-0.17	0.12
14	0.47	-0.09	0.19
15	0.10	0.26	0.31
16	0.03	0.12	0.70
17	0.08	0.04	0.76
18	0.01	0.65	0.09
19	0.42	0.24	0.03
20	0.61	-0.25	0.21

In interpreting the rotated factor pattern, an item was considered to load on a given factor if the factor loading was 0.40 or greater for that factor, and was different from the other factors by 0.15.

4.2.4.1   First factor: Motivation and Self-directedness

The first factor had a higher loading for the eight items below and was labeled as Motivation and Self-directedness .

1) I do not feel like studying English.

4) I cannot carry out the plan / I cannot keep the plan.

11) I do not prepare for quizzes in daily lessons.

12) I do not prepare for the lesson.

13) I do not review the lesson by myself.

14) I do not practice reading the passage orally.

19) I have too much assignment to prepare for term exams.

20) I do not review term exams.

4.2.4.2   Second factor: General Study Habit

The second factor had a higher loading for the three items below and was labeled as General Study Habit , because it had the impression that students had difficulty in finding the proper way.

2) I do not know how to study English.

3) I cannot get good marks even if I study hard.

18) I do not know how to prepare for term exams.

4.2.4.3   Third factor: Specific Study Habit

The third factor had a higher loading for the four items below and was labeled as Specific Study Habit , because it had the impression that it was concerned with the materials that students were using.

31

8) I do not know how to study listening of English.

9) I do not know how to write English essays.

16) I do not know how to solve the passage-type entrance exam in the workbook.

17) I do not know how to solve the translation-type entrance exam in the workbook.

4.2.4.4   Residual items

The following five items were removed from the initial questionnaire as residual items.

5) I cannot understand the content of the lesson.

6) I cannot concentrate on the lesson.

7) I do not know how to translate the sentences into Japanese.

10) I do not know how to pronounce English words.

15) I cannot memorize English vocabularies.

4.2.4.5   Reliability of the scales

Three factors Motivation and Self-directedness (Item 1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 20), General Study Habit (Item 2, 3 and 18), and Specific Study Habit (Item 8, 9, 16 and 17) were extracted as the problems that students have in studying English II.   These three factors were used as the scale.   In order to estimate the reliability of the scale, Cronbach s Coefficient Alpha was calculated in this analysis (see Table 4).

Table 4

Cronbach s Coefficient Alpha

	Motivation and Self-directedness	General Study Habit	Specific Study Habit
April-Total	0.778	0.710	0.733
April-Male	0.838	0.699	0.688
April-Female	0.662	0.692	0.782
July-Total	0.709	0.788	0.719
July-Male	0.770	0.762	0.714
July-Female	0.571	0.817	0.728

The reliability for each scale was ensured (.7) except Motivation and Self-directedness April Female (=.66) and Motivation and Self-directedness July Female (=.57).

4.2.4.6 Comparison of the results between April and July

Using these three factors as the scale, the difference of the result between April and July was tested. The averages and SDs of the items extracted as Motivation and Self-directedness , General Study Habit and Specific study habit in April and July were reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Averages and SDs of Motivation and Self-directedness,

General Study Habit and Specific Study Habit

Factor	Average	SD
Motivation and Self-directedness - April	3.48	0.80
Motivation and Self-directedness - July	2.93	0.71
General Study Habit - April	3.12	1.03
General Study Habit - July	2.71	0.96
Specific Study Habit - April	3.50	0.94
Specific Study Habit - July	3.36	0.92

The paired t-test was used for the result of April and July. Statistical significance on the result of Motivation and Self-directedness in April and June was accepted (one-tailed test: $t=7.75$, $df=99$, $p<.05$). Statistical significance on the result of General Study Habit in April and June was accepted (one-tailed test: $t=4.75$, $df=103$, $p<.05$). Statistical significance on the result of Specific Study Habit in April and June was accepted (one-tailed test: $t=1.716$, $df=102$, $p<.05$).

4.2.4.7 Gender difference of the result between April and July

Using Motivation and Self-directedness, General Study Habit, and Specific Study Habit as the scale, the gender difference of the result in April and July was tested. The result of t-test showed that significance was accepted only for General Study Habit in April (one-tailed test: $t=-2.75$, $df=110$, $p<.05$) and Specific Study Habit in April (one-tailed test: $t=-2.57$, $df=110$, $p<.05$)

4.3   Results of qualitative research

Three types of qualitative research were conducted as videotaped sessions, reflective journal sessions, and class observation by a colleague.   Their results were as follows.

4.3.1   Videotaped sessions

All the lessons for one class from April to July were videotaped and observed objectively.   The videotaped lessons made the teacher watch the lesson from students' viewpoints, and thus notice many problems in the lesson, such as the usage of the blackboard, delivery, eye contact, habits and so on.   Furthermore, watching the lesson video itself proved to be a reflective practice for the teacher, because the teacher never noticed the problems in the lesson without considering their reasons and solutions. This reflective aspect of videotaped sessions will be discussed in 5.3.1.   Twelve of them were analyzed in detail in the reflective journal, which will be explained in the next section.

4.3.2   Reflective journal entries

Twelve videotaped lessons were reviewed and analyzed in the first semester. Lesson objectives, materials, activities, timetable, and reflections of each lesson were generally recorded in the teaching journal.   These descriptions helped the teacher notice the problems in the lesson, along with video taped sessions.   Writing lesson objectives and timetable before the lesson, on the other hand, made the teacher sensitive to the planning of lessons.   Besides, keeping the records of each lesson made it easier for the teacher to remember the problems in the previous lessons, and compare the latest lesson with them.

4.3.3   Class observation by a colleague

The observation by the colleague gave the teacher another objective views on the lesson, which was quite different from the observation by the students as seen in quantitative research sections.   Some of the comments supported the purposes of the lesson or the activities, but others were against them.   For example, it was indicated that various activities in the lesson seemed to motivate the students, while too much emphasis on the knowledge and the procedure of the lesson was likely to make students ignore the important messages in the material.   The colleague proposed that more time should be spent for deeper understanding of the material.   This problem will be discussed in detail in 5.3.3.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusions

5.1   Introduction

The final chapter aims to analyze and discuss the methodology and results of the qualitative research in section 5.2 and the quantitative research in section 5.3.   In conclusion, the limitations of this research and suggestions for future research will be clarified.

5.2   Quantitative research

Five quantitative research studies based on three types of questionnaires were conducted in this study:

1. Preliminary Investigation A: Benesse Study Support (BSS)
2. Preliminary Investigation B: Student Impression of Teacher Style (SITS)
3. Pre-treatment: Study Problems 20 - Pre (Pre-SP20)
4. Midway check: Revised SITS
5. Post treatment: Study Problems 20 - Post (Post-SP20)

This section will analyze and discuss them according to three types of the questionnaires; BSS, SITS, and SP20

5.2.1   BSS

Results of BSS revealed the advantages and problems of the students in comparison with the national averages, and thus implied the orientation of this research. First, the students have established the custom to study English at home.   According to

Item 3, more than 80 percent of the students prepare for English lessons, while the average of Hyogo Prefecture for the same item is about 50 percent.   Furthermore, Item 8 shows that about half of the students translate the passage into Japanese, in contrast with 26 percent of Hyogo average.   These customs can be an advantage in language learning in terms of learner autonomy.

On the other hand, the students appear to feel more serious about their problems in studying English that the average in Hyogo Prefecture.   Item 7 illustrates this. More than 20 percent of the students, which is higher than the Hyogo average, say,   I cannot get good marks even if I study hard.   and   I cannot carry out the plan / I cannot keep the plan.   In item 10, more than 50 percent of the students do not review the lesson, and about 15 percent of the students cannot finish all of the homework, and cannot review the lesson.   Moreover, in item 6, more than one fourth of the students feel worried about the lesson.   These problems cannot be ignored because they can make the learners affective filter higher, and such anxiety works against the concept of learner autonomy.   This is why these problems have been incorporated into SP20 as research targets.

5.2.2   SITS, Revised SITS

SITS and revised SITS to investigate students impressions on each activity in the lesson showed some interesting results, which differed from what was hypothesized.

5.2.2.1 Necessity

The questionnaire results indicated that students desired a lecture-style explanation and translation, even though they were negatively recognized as the grammar-translation method.   This trend is also confirmed by the final report on SELHi by Ikeda Senior High School Attached to Osaka Kyoiku University.   It shows the result of the five-point-scale questionnaire about students impression on various

activities in English I lessons.　Accordingly, Translation should be minimum scored 2.8/5.0, and Grammatical explanation should be minimum scored 2.5/5.0, while oral-reading activities should be promoted scored 4.1/5.0 and listening activities should be further implemented scored 4.0/5.0.　These results imply that translation and grammatical explanation are necessary for senior high school students in the first and second grade, probably because they want solve the problems and questions in their preparation.　For the same reason, answering students questions regarding their preparation, showed the high scores on necessity.　Translation and grammatical explanation seem to help students to establish the custom to study at home.　Therefore, they are desirable from the viewpoint of learner autonomy, and should not be denied simply because they are negatively recognized in general.

On the contrary, the model reading by the teacher, which was naturally supposed to be done in the lesson, seemed unnecessary to the students.　This was because they had read the textbook as a preparation before they took the lesson, which meant that the model reading by the teacher was redundant.

These results illustrate the necessity to choose the activities suitable to students learning style preferences.　In other words, teachers should not decide the content of the lesson only by their own criteria.

5.2.2.2　Difficulty

The result shows that students have difficulty mainly in two types of activities. The first type is the entrance examination exercises, such as essay writing and the workbook.　The level of English in the entrance examinations tends to be difficult because the purpose is to serve a gate-keeping function in which only a certain number of applicants can pass.

The second type is the activities that require students to infer the content from the context, and to produce English sentences by themselves.　The examples are sentence memorization, shadowing practice, and reading the cloze-test-like handout.　These

creative output activities are efficient for students noticing, and thus essential for effective language learning.

On the other hand, simple reproduction activities such as pair oral reading and review of the vocabularies are not so difficult for students. They should not be considered to be output activities in the usual sense because they do not induce the learners to notice gaps between their own production and the L2 target. Appropriate arrangement of the activities according to the level of difficulty is important in the lesson in order to lower the affective filter and encourage noticing.

5.2.2.3 Interest

The result clarifies that the activities with the high score in interest are closely related with interaction.   The examples are game-like activities with columns and rows, and pair oral reading.   Students tend to feel less interested in the activities with less interaction, such as workbook practice, vocabulary quiz, and essay writing.

Meanwhile, the scores of necessity seem inversely related to those of interest. Most of the activities with higher scores in interest show the lower scores in necessity. When interaction is removed in the process of input, the amount of input tends to increase because time for interaction is saved.   This raises the score of necessity, but less interaction is likely to induce less interest, which decreases the intake.   On the other hand, more interaction is likely to induce more interest and increase the intake, but the amount of input tends to decrease. The choice of activities in terms of the balance between necessity and interest is required for effective language learning.

5.2.3   Pre- and Post-SP20

Before discussing the result of Pre- and Post-SP20 (Study Problems 20), it should be noted again that scores in SP20 are counter-intuitive because higher scores mean that the problem is more serious.   Higher scores are supposed to mean better ones, but

SP20 does not follow this, for the items in SP20 were simply taken from the preliminary investigations, which aims at looking for the problems that the students have in studying English I.

The result of SP20 will be analyzed separately according to the pre-treatment in 5.2.3.1, post-treatment in 5.2.3.2, and their correlation by factor analysis in 5.2.3.3.

5.2.3.1　Pre-SP20

Of all the items in pre-SP20, the most serious problem is about the too much assignment (4.2/5.0).　This is mainly because the students study in one of the most academic high schools in the prefecture, and the requirements in studying are considerably high.　The result of Pre-SP20 clarified the students reality that they are always chased by the preparation for the lesson, a lot of assignments, and examinations. Thus, the lesson was changed according to this reality.　It was planned that assignments and reviews are incorporated inside the lesson as much as possible.　At the same time, to-do lists were delivered to students so that they could easily plan to study by themselves (See Appendix K).　This is just one example of the countermeasures for each problem in SP20.　Each problem in SP20 had its background and the lesson was changed to solve it.　Not all the problems could be dealt with enough between pre- and post-SP20, but the rigid procedure to solve the problems proved to work well, as shown below in the next section.

5.2.3.2　Post-SP20

The items concerning students psychology has been significantly improved between pre- and post-SP20.　Examples are I cannot concentrate on the lesson (-1.0), I do not feel like studying English (-0.9), and I cannot understand the content of the lesson (-0.7).　This is because the choice and arrangement of the activities in the lesson was reconsidered according to the result of SITS in May.　Reflections of each

lesson by videos and journals may be another reason for the improvement.

There are also the improvements on I do not prepare for the lesson , I do not review the lesson by myself , and I do not practice reading the passage orally (-0.7, respectively). The interactions and the types of activities in these areas increased, which made students realize the necessity for these.

On the contrary, there are no significant improvements on I do not review term exams (+0.1), I do not know how to write English essays (+0.1), and I do not know how to study listening of English (-0.1). This is simply because there was no or just insufficient countermeasures for these problems due to lack of time or other reasons. For the problem that I do not know how to solve the passage-type entrance exam in the workbook (-0.2), various countermeasures were tried once every week, but they did not gain any favorable reaction from students. This will need further research.

5.2.3.3 Factor analysis

According to the result of the factor analysis, the problems that students had in studying English II, Motivation and Self-directedness , General Study Habit , and Specific Study Habit all seemed to be alleviated by the activities in this classroom and teacher interventions. However, even though a pre-post comparison of Specific Study Habit was significant, the amount of change was much less than the others. This was partly because not enough time was available to complete the contents in the lesson.

The result of t-test for the gender difference of the result in April and July indicated that girls felt more serious than boys about General Study Habit and Specific Study Habit in April.

5.3   Qualitative research

The sessions were videotaped, reflective journals were kept, and class observation by a colleague was conducted as to collect qualitative data. Such data is more

subjective in nature than that which is collected through quantitative procedures, but the use of them for teacher reflection and as alternative perspectives of the situation turned out to be essential for teacher development as shown below.

5.3.1   Videotaped sessions

Videotaped sessions continuously proved to work well.   Teachers can watch their own lessons objectively from the viewpoint of students.   They can visually check their eye contact, delivery, the usage of blackboards, and movements in the classroom. Noticing the problems in the lesson through the video is a first step to improve the lesson.   Actually, teachers naturally consider how they can solve the problems when they notice them.   Furthermore, they are likely to be conscious of their problems in the following lessons and try to improve them.   For example, the videotaped session in April made me notice that my delivery was generally too fast.   Even I myself could not follow me in the video.   I felt ashamed of this and sorry for the students.   I tried to slow down the speed of my delivery since then.   The videotaped session in July showed that my delivery was greatly improved in that I was able to change the speed of my delivery naturally according to types of the activities in the lesson.   This was only one example of how videotaped sessions assisted my reflective practice as a teacher.

Students seemed curious and sensitive about the video camera, but continuous videotaping made them less sensitive to it.   As a result, it was possible to watch the students from different sides of the classroom after the lesson, thus providing a range of perspectives on how the class was being experienced.

Videotaping all the lessons proved less time-consuming than expected.   A hard disk-digital recording video camera, which does not need any tape, was used in this research.   It was helpful to use digital recording since it was not necessary to watch all the lessons. Furthermore, timing and tracking could be done in a much more precise way.

5.3.2   Reflective journal entries

Reflective journals, along with videotaped sessions, helped deepen the consideration on the purpose of activities, time allocation, and choice of activities in each lesson.   Before the lesson, the teachers write down the lesson objectives and time table in the journal.   The act of writing at this time clarifies what the teachers try to do in the lesson because they can visually grasp the image of the lesson.   After the lesson, they keep the records of the lesson in the journal, which gives them the chance to reflect their lessons.   Reflecting the lesson, along with videotaped sessions, is another important step to improve the lesson, because it clarifies the problems of the lesson that the teachers should solve.   For example, in every reflective journal entry, I wrote down the problems in my lesson.   However, the types of the problems gradually changed lesson by lesson.   That was because I was able to solve some of the problems, and then coped with the new ones.

Also, time-sequential entries made it possible to compare each lesson visually. This visual comparison had some advantages.   First, the similar pattern of the lesson was likely to be avoided because it seemed to be boring and demotivating to students. For example, variations on approaches to oral reading developed into 34 types during this research (Teaching Journal, http://d.hatena.ne.jp/JCD00620/20060428).   Second, a mistake that was recorded and observed was less likely to be repeated.   Reading the past entries helped me to remember the problems and avoid repeating unsuccessful behaviors.   In this sense, comparing the lesson by time-sequential reflective journal entries can be also an important step to improve the lesson.

5.3.3   Class observation by a colleague

The objective observation by a colleague helped me to confirm a notion that most teachers are concerned about namely, what teachers intend to happen in a certain activity is not necessarily understood properly and that therefore what is intended to be

taught is not always learned.　For example, as seen in 4.3.3, the effort to avoid a monotonous atmosphere in the class seemed inconsequential to the colleague because, according to her impression, the lesson was too superficial to deepen any understanding of the material.　What matters here is not which opinion is right, but the fact that there can be inverse relationship between the activities in the lesson.　Teachers should choose the activity in the lesson, granting its disadvantages, as well as advantages.

Class observation by a colleague can provide teachers with many valuable insights which they do not usually notice, just as the quantitative research for the students do.　Therefore, it should be further promoted to improve the lesson.

5.4　　　Limitations of the study

This research mainly has three limitations in terms of causality, generalization and efficiency.　First, direct causality can not be assumed between the methodology and the result, though the results show that there is strong correlation between them.　Also, there might be other factors that have contributed to the improvements in student scores, such as cram schools, other lessons, home study and so on.　To establish causality a different type of data collection and analysis on a much larger group of students would be necessary.

Second, there are some problems in terms of the generalizability of these results. This investigation examined a small group of students in intact classes in one school. It would be unwise to assume that these results can be applied to other students, schools, and subjects.　Furthermore, in this research, one of the participants and the observer was the same.　The observation and evaluation by the third person is indispensable for more objective research.

Third, this research is inefficient in that the target area is too broad.　The twenty problems were chose from the result of the questionnaires, but they should have been narrowed into just a few topic areas because too broad area of the research tends to bring a shallow analysis for each small area.

5.5 Suggestions for future research

There are at least three ways to further develop this research in the future. The first is the collaborative action research that Burns proposes. Collaboration with other teachers will enable the research to be implemented more objectively. At the same time, it can spread the effect of the research more efficiently. Furthermore, sharing the research with others will save the time and workforce. Vieira and Marques (2002) proposed an exploratory set of criteria to supervise the quality of teacher development practice in a principled way. Their criteria will work in the collaborative action research.

The second is the efficiency of research procedure. This research conducted two preliminary investigations, one pre- and post-treatment, and one midway survey. At least the midway survey can be omitted, and it is possible to make each survey more efficient.

The third is the application to other subjects, such as academic writing and oral communication. The generalization of the research can surely improve the other subjects, and help teachers solve their problems in the lesson.

5.6 Summary

This paper has provided the comprehensive model to improve English II lessons from the perspectives of teacher adaptability, input-intake mechanism and learner autonomy. Traditional lessons based on the grammar-translation method have some problems in that they put too much emphasis on input from teachers. Input-intake mechanism values comprehensible input and, above all, students intake via interaction, output and noticing. Noticing through interaction and output is essential for efficient language learning, which requires learners positive attitudes to use language and thus calls for the necessity of learner autonomy.

Learner autonomy focuses on the individual differences of learners, their

motivation, and learning strategies.   The core idea of learner autonomy is that there is no best teaching method because individual learners and their language levels are different.   Teachers can motivate learners to realize their autonomy to adapt themselves and their lessons to the students and classroom situations.

Both input-intake mechanism and learner autonomy imply the importance of teacher adaptability, which has made this study adopt the framework of action research with questionnaires on students learning environments and teacher styles, videotaping of the lessons, reflective journal sessions and so on.

The results of the research have shown that the problems that the students have in studying English II have decreased, and that students motivation has significantly improved.   Above all, they have encouraged the teacher to regain confidence in his teaching creed and method.

Therefore, I strongly believe and hope that this practice, with its theoretical background and methodology, will meet the MEXT expectations shown in the 2003 Action Plan, and promote the further practices in other subjects as well, and thus lead to the better English education in Japan.