CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Improving communicative competence through mime: Bringing students' 'out-of-school' literacy practices into Japanese university EFL oral communication classes
Authors	Nfor, Samuel
Publication date	2018
Original Citation	Nfor, S. (2018) 'Improving communicative competence through mime: Bringing students' 'out-of-school' literacy practices into Japanese university EFL oral communication classes', Scenario: A Journal of Performative Teaching, Learning, Research, XII(2), pp. 13-30. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.12.2.2
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	10.33178/scenario.12.2.2
Rights	© 2018, The Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Download date	2026-11-07 03:37:25
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/12626

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

ISSN 1649-8526
Scenario
Language • Culture • Literature
Volume 2018 · Issue 2
http://scenario.ucc.ie

Improving Communicative Competence through Mime: Bringing Students' 'Out-of-School' Literacy Practices into Japanese University EFL Oral Communication Classes

Samuel Nfor

Abstract

This study uses the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to emphasize interaction in EFL study to prepare students for real life communication outside of formal language teaching contexts. Using mime drama techniques to show a range of literacy practices, the study seeks to show that establishing creative links between students' language use and learning inside and outside of the classroom is essential for making formal education more relevant to students' life experiences and identities. The study examines the benefits and challenges of experimental CLT in a Japanese university EFL oral communication class and concludes that bringing students' 'out-of-school' literacy practices from outside the context of formal education into the EFL classroom acknowledges their investment in classroom language practices, secures student engagement, and yields perceived improvement.

1 Mime and Second Language Acquisition (L2)

Mime is a nonverbal portrayal of thought or narrative through gesture, body movement, and facial expressions. Despite the nonverbal nature of mime, it can be a potent communicative teaching tool, as Dougill (1987: 13) suggests, "recall of language items is helped when there is an associated image and although no language is used, it can be a spur to language use where there is need for explanation, both in terms of the teacher's instructions and students' discussions and interpretations." Vygotsky (1978) stressed "the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition" and argued that "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (Vygotsky 1978: 90). Therefore, language gains meaning in interaction and use, rather than as knowledge in the possession of the speaker. Similarly, Halliday acknowledges that learning a language is a "construction" process, stating "a

Copyright © 2018 the author[s]. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.12.2.2

child has to construct language, but he does not do it alone, he does it in interaction with others and others are not simply providing a model, they are actively engaged in the construction process along with him" (Halliday 2004: 310). Therefore, the use of mime in English language teaching, by virtue of its kinaesthetic nature, could be an effective way to encourage student interaction, engagement and language retention. The use of mime in the current study is in line with the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) that emerged from Hymes' concept of (1972) Communicative Competence.

2 Theoretical Framework: Communicative Competence (CC) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The underlying theory for mechanical language pattern practice associated with Grammar Translation and Audiolingualism from the early 1940s was questioned by linguists like Noam Chomsky. Chomsky introduced the 'linguistic competence and performance' theory of language teaching and defined an individual's 'competence' as the set of grammatical rules that are internalized and 'performance' as the production of actual utterances,the assumption being that once learners are competent they will be able to read, write, listen and speak (Bilash 2009).

Chomsky's concepts of competence and performance drew criticism from supporters of a communicative perspective in language teaching. Savignon (1972) argued against the notion of using linguistic competence as a hypothetical rationale for learning and teaching. Hymes (1972) maintained that besides the rules for describing and combining sounds into morphemes and morphemes into sentences, the rules for using language appropriately in context or sociolinguistic competence is also necessary to rationalize language acquisition and language use. Thus, Hymes coined the term 'communicative competence' and observed that with communicative competence,

> [. . .] a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others (Hymes 1972: 277).

The idea "communicative competence" suggests that people not only need linguistic repertoires, but also specific cultural knowledge to communicate effectively. Influenced by both Chomsky and Hymes, Widdowson claimed that language knowledge was more than understanding, speaking, reading, and writing sentences, but also entailed the understanding of how sentences are used to communicate.He observed that "learners do not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences as isolated linguistic units of random occurrence; but also, how to use sentences appropriately to achieve communicative purposes" (Widdowson 1978).

The notion of CLT emerged from Widdowson's (1978) support for communicative competence being taught along linguistic competence. He argued that acquisition of linguistic skills in isolation may inhibit the development of communicative abilities. In light of Widdowson's work, there was a trend towards teachers making their classes more 'communicative', thus the emergence of the CLT approach. CLT lessons contain activities where learners communicate and where tasks are completed by means of interaction with other learners. CLT teaching extensively uses pair and group activities and emphasizes successful task completion through communication with other students rather than on the accurate use of word and sentence forms. During CLT activities, the teacher plays the role of a facilitator or prompter, who monitorsactivities, usually without interrupting, and gives feedback on completion of the communication event and linguistic performance of students.

Hall (2012: 76) suggests that "in recognizing learners' experiences as important sources of knowledge, using the sociocultural worlds that students bring with them to school creates a culturally relevant meaningful and instructional classroom education." The implication is that bringing students' 'out-of-school' linguistic and cultural resources into the EFL class, such as playing computer games, taking and uploading pictures on Instagram, or even shopping for a pet, immediately makes content relevant and thereby engaging for the students. These resources are referred to as 'literacy practices,' defined by Barton and Hamilton (2000) as "general cultural ways of utilizing written language, which people draw upon in their daily lives."

These practices are characterized as 'literacy' because they are multi-modal, involving reading and writing with the use of symbols, pictures, colour, and music. They are also multi-media as the practices combine the use of paper-based and electronic media, are generative, and involve learner creativity. Finally, these practices tend to be interactive, participatory, and collaborative. It is claimed in this study that students' discussion and interpretation of their literacy practices through mime enhanced their communicative competence.

3 Aim of study and Research questions

The aim of this study is to make a contribution to research about Japanese university EFL student oral communication improvement. A CLT approach in combination with mime was adopted to engage students in classroom discourse. The study uses mime to help functionalize students' 'out-of-school' literacy practices in the language classroom in order to enhance learning and communicative competence. Experimenting with students' 'out-of-school' literacy practices in the classroom was emphasized by Hall (2012) who stated that "education should start with the linguistic and cultural resources that students bring with them to school." I hypothesize that through mime the teacher will be 'forced away' from the centre of the class to give students space to work with language in ways that are enjoyable, memorable and continually varying (Rivers 1987). Mime sessions in EFL classes require students to

interact in pairs or groups, collaborate to reach agreement on how to conduct their roles, dialogues, and stories. Through mime, students learn how to interact in different situations, ask questions, and make contributions or express themselves; thus, enabling a constant interchange of language that seem more real-world and natural, because they have to behave as they would in their usual interactions with people out of class.

Finally, using gestures and actions to dramatize experiences and situations through mime, bring an EFL oral communication class to life and provides a framework in which students have a need to communicate and convey their emotions, thereby improving the quality and authenticity of their communicative messages.

The study will set out to answer the following questions:

- What are some of the challenges Japanese students face in achieving communicative competence?
- How does the use of mime and students' literacy practices address these challenges in a CLT approach?
- Does introducing students' literacy practices through mime in a CLT approach improve classroom interaction and keep students motivated in the learning process?
- How does employing mime and students literacy practices with a CLT approach impact on students perceived communicative competence?

4 Context of study

The context of this study was two 90-minutes *Speaking in Academic Context* classes for 25 first-year English majors I taught once a week at a national university in the Kanto area of Japan. This case study was chosen because English language majors generally have high motivation to study as most aspire to work in English educational settings either in Japan or abroad, plan to visit or study in other countries, or obtain jobs with international organizations. Thus, because of their goal-driven career plans, many of the students are receptive to innovative learning approaches. The students had six years of English education at junior high school and high school and obtained TOEIC scores of 400-500, which is equivalent to A2 level of the CEFR standardized test. The aim of this year-long course is to develop English communicative competence through pair and group activities on daily-life topics such as introducing oneself, travel, entertainment, family, friends, part-time jobs, studying abroad, shopping, school, feelings, culture and social network media. The course emphasizes vocabulary, language learning activities, and expressions to develop students' interpersonal communication skills. By the end of the course, the aim is for students to be able to:

- have more meaningful, fluent, and active conversations
- talk about daily topics
- use relevant key expressions to ask and respond appropriately to questions and requests
- request clarifications should misunderstandings occur and confirm understanding
- respond to good and bad news
- make requests and offers

A course book is supplemented with other class activities such as slideshow presentations, drama-based activities (role plays, skits, and mime), and video-clips of students' activities for self-reflection and self/peer evaluation. These activities, based on establishing situations in the classroom in which students employ language in a meaningful way, have proven effective for foreign language learning. Classrooms have a 25-student capacity and are equipped with a video projector, iPads, Computer Assisted Language equipment, and microphones. Desks and chairs are fixed to the floor. Students are evaluated through homework tasks, attendance, class participation, slideshow presentations and pair or group speaking tests.

In my experience of having taught EFL in the Japanese university setting for 16 years, the language problems students face ranges from ineffective use of communication strategies, poor use of discourse markers, inadequate use of body language, and insufficient facial expressions, making it difficult for them to sustain an extended and meaningful conversation in English. The effectiveness of exploiting Japanese students' 'out of school' literacy practices to experiment with mime in a CLT context is useful, given the low propensity of Japanese students to actually speak English in class and the cultural importance of taciturnity. I speculate that a communicative language teaching approach utilizing mime and students' 'out-of-school' literacy practices would enable me to support student interpersonal communication and boost their motivation. Drama activities like mime demand participation, asking students to draw on previous experiences and create situations requiring precise communication (Heathcote 1984). Heathcote's drama concept connects with Vygotsky's (2011) socio-cultural theory in the sense of social interaction being fundamental to learner cognitive development. Therefore, using mime to realize student literacy practices in EFL can help foster L2 learning.

5 Mime Activity Employed

Mime can be a highly demanding exercise at an artistic level, but simple at the basic level for language learning. Having students mime some of their

out of school literacy practices has proven to increase their investment and motivation for learning. To successfully implement mime and engage students' identities through their 'out-of-school' literacy practices, a list of common literacy practices involving reading and writing common among Japanese university students was prepared (see Appendix 1).

Norton and Kramsch (2000: 140) comment that "identities and lived experiences of language learners are already part of the language learning/language teaching experience whether or not this is formally recognized in the second language curriculum." The purpose of the mime activity employed in the current study is to practice *the language of confirming understanding* in an interactive manner and to put the learner in the centre of learning in a communicative setting.

To implement this activity, students were asked to go into groups of 3 or 4, and each group was supplied with one of the situations on the list to mime. The students had 5 to 10 minutes to discuss in groups about how to enact the mime and decide on roles. When a group was ready, they stood in front of the class and mimed the situation while their peers guessed the situation. Those miming did not speak and could only nod or shake their heads in agreement or disagreement. Students were encouraged to think about the setting, character and situations in the miming activity as the basis of making guesses. As soon as the mime was guessed correctly, those miming gave a round of applause to the person who guessed the situation and the 'actors' read out the situation they were miming. During the miming and guessing, I moved around the class helping groups of students with clues in the guessing process or joined students in front of the class to assist with the miming, thus scaffolding the learning scene.[1]

In the next class, student groups were each allocated 20 minutes to discuss and write their own 'out-of-school' literacy practices (see Appendix 2). I moved around the class helping out each group by monitoring and fine-tuning their language use. When each group was ready they presented their mime to the class for the others to guess.

6 Ethnographic perspective

6.1 Japanese English Education Context

High school graduates in Japan take at least six years of formal English education; however, most do not have a good command of spoken English when starting university. One possible reason is that Japanese English teachers mainly use Japanese as the medium of instruction and use the grammar translation method to teach reading and writing skills. These skills are measurable in high-stakes testing, as observed by Butler and Iino:

[1] According to Hall (2012), 'scaffolding' is an important way of engaging students and enhancing learning because scaffolding involves tailored teacher guidance toward better understanding and greater independence.

> The content of English class activities at the high school level is influenced by the content of university entrance examinations, given the fact that approximately 50% of high school graduates pursue post-secondary education. University entrance examinations, which are not necessarily constrained by high school English curricula, tend to heavily emphasize reading and the grammatical aspects of English and give little attention to oral/aural skills. (Butler & Iino 2005: 29)

As a result, the typical Japanese English classroom is teacher-centred, with little opportunity for student speaking practice. Native speaker 'assistants' in some schools have little autonomy to help students develop communicative competence and often play the role of "human tape recorders" (Miller 2014: 1). Besides the teacher-centred education style, culturally speaking, Japanese are said to find beauty and elegance in a person who sends implicit, subtle messages (Lebra 1976) rather than those who are outspoken or 'loud'. As such, Japanese place value on communicative silences (Kumagai 1994), and a cultural reticence towards turn-taking leads to less practice in the English language class for communicative competence skill acquisition. To address these challenges, there is need to adopt a Sociocultural Linguistic perspective for CLT. Sociocultural Linguistic approach relies on the role of language and social interaction in learning and is often associated with Vygotsky (1978), whose Sociocultural Theory emphasized the social aspects of learning.

Therefore, this study sought to develop student ability to use language appropriately in sociocultural contexts.

Ethnographic methodology, which centralizes on understanding participants as agents within social contexts (Creese 2010), can address these issues. It involves sustained conversation and participation in a setting for an extended period. In my EFL teaching career, I have identified student difficulties and have found the Sociocultural Linguistic approach a proactive pedagogy from my emic (formal instruction and informal conversations) perspective. In addition, I have used etic observation and cultural analysis for problem investigation and understanding. Kell (2010: 224) has advocated both approaches as "important and complementary because the etic refers to the observation and insights made from an outsider's perspective while the emic involves such events from the inside."

6.2 Questionnaires

For this study a qualitative research methodology was used with questionnaires carried out at the start and end of lessons to gauge student enthusiasm and analyse their self-assessment. Each student filled out a questionnaire before the start of the study to relate on any past experience with mime and language learning. At end of the mime activity, the same students completed a questionnaire about how they felt about the mime activity, if they thought their English had improved, and if they would like to try the same approach in the future. The initial questionnaire aimed to measure: 1) the frequency of

speaking practice experienced in junior high and high school classes; and 2) how frequently their Japanese English teachers used CLT activities. Responses were marked on a 5-point scale indicating frequency: 1 = never, 2 = a little, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always. The results are presented in Figure 1.

- Question 1: A majority of students were taught by Japanese English teachers instead of native speakers in junior high and high school, either exclusively (32%) or more often than not (35%).
- Question 2: English was often used as the language of instruction (40%), but to a much lesser extent always (28%).
- Question 3: The focus of instruction was reading and writing always (32%) or often (40%).
- Question 4: Spoken English was practiced a little (45%) or sometimes (15%).
- Question 5: Teachers were native speakers of English rarely (45%) or sometimes (32%).
- Question 6: Games were used often (35%) or rarely (20%).
- Question 7: In most cases, English was studied in order to prepare for high school and university entrance examinations (75%).
- Question 8: The majority of students did not have experiences with extracurricular activities (55%).
- Question 9: Students worked rarely (32%) or sometimes (32%) in small groups.
- Question 10: Students were rarely (20%) or only sometimes (40%) satisfied with their English instruction.

Certain patterns can be discerned where $\geq$ 60% responses cluster at "often/always": Q1, Q3 Q7. These question items measured teacher-centred construct of English language teaching and highlighted that reading and writing classes formed the basis of English instruction in some Japanese junior high and high schools. This potentially correlates with students' poor oral communicative competence by the time they entered university. There is low preference for oral communication in small groups, engaging students in extracurricular activities and the use of activities out of textbook for language learning (Q6, Q8 Q9) suggesting a correlation between small group interaction in social contexts (Vygotsky 1978) and learning.

Figure 2 shows the questionnaire results from the end of the mime activity, that was used to gauge students' performance and to answer the research

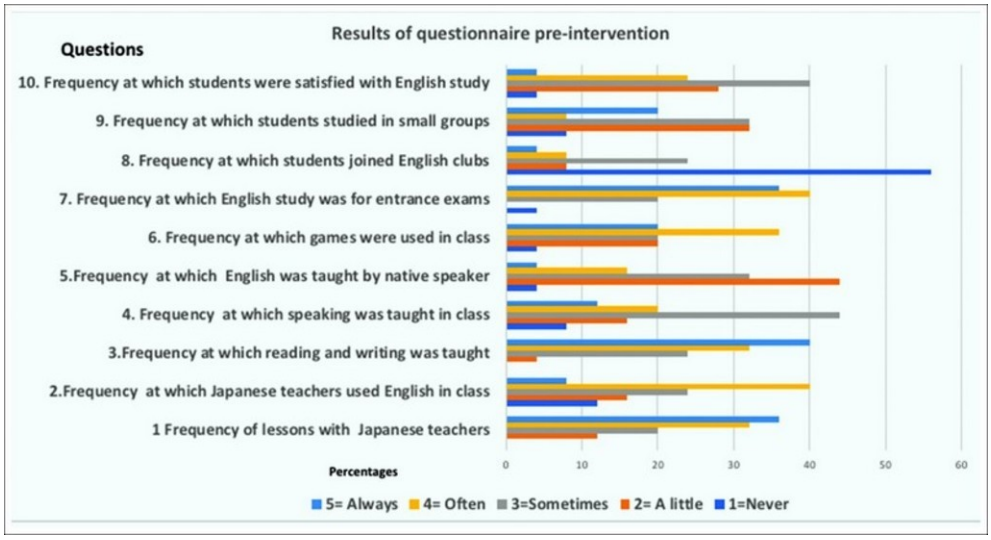


Figure 1: Graph results of questionnaire pre-intervention (see Appendix 3 for questions)

questions of how CLT through mime and students' literacy practices impacted students' communicative competence. Responses were marked on a 5-point scale indicating the usefulness of the activity: 1 = not useful at all, 2 = a little useful, 3 = somewhat useful, 4 = useful, 5 = very useful.

Miming activities were rated to be useful / very useful for

- speaking practice (33% / 25%; total: 58%)
- speaking practice in subsequent classes (38% / 25%; total: 63%)
- making the English lessons fun 25% / 58%; total: 83%)
- developing creativity (42% / 38%; total 80%)
- incorporating personal experiences into the learning process (50% / 25%; total: 75%)
- developing confidence in speaking (42% / 30%; total: 72%)
- having students' identities be part of the learning process (50% / 30%; total 80%)
- increasing students' class participation (38% / 45%; total: 83%)

Miming activities were rated to be useful or somewhat useful for

- improving classroom interaction (54% / 25%; total: 79% total)

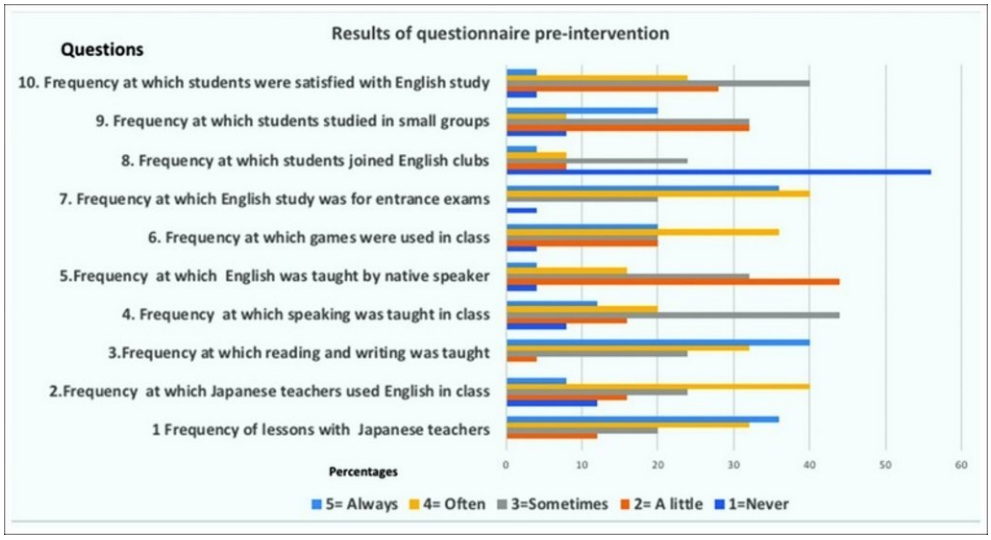


Figure 2: Graph results of questionnaire post intervention (see Appendix 4 for questions)

- practicing English in everyday situations (38% / 38%; total: 76%)

In the responses, clustering of $\geq$ 60% in "4 = Useful" and "5 = Very Useful" Q2, and Q4, suggests mime was effective in classroom interaction and for making learning fun.

Q6, and Q8, had $\geq$ 60% clustering, displaying similar response patterns for usefulness of "out of class literacy practices" in the language class and so anchoring Norton and Kramsch' argument (2000) that the language teacher needs to incorporate the lived experiences of language learners into the formal language curriculum and take cognizance of their multiple and changing investments in the target language. Q5, Q7 and Q8, "4 = Useful" and "5 = Very Useful", at $\geq$ 60% suggest perceived congruence between mime and creativity (Q5), confidence (Q7), and motivation (Q8).

Personal observations and informal conversations with students and teachers about English study in Japan complemented the analyses of the pre- and post-questionnaire; thus, allowing for some assurance of the validity of this study.

7 Challenges and Benefits

Applying the CLT approach in the classroom context comes with certain challenges. Firstly, there is the risk of not sufficiently monitoring students' activities. Students may feel that by leading activities themselves they are not learning enough. However, close monitoring by the instructor communicates to students the teacher is still in charge and interested in what they are doing even though they are navigating selected activities themselves. The importance

of the teacher to demonstrate control of the class when students are engaged in interactive learning in the Japanese context helps to maintain the spirit of co-operation which within the structure of the group in Japan is a responsibility and not a choice (Tsuchida & Lewis 1998:199 cited in Donnery 2009: 21). So, when students understand that the teacher is immersed in the teaching process and that he sets high expectation for students in the execution of learning tasks, they take their learning more seriously.

When assigning interactive activities, it is helpful to move around the classroom during pair and group work and be positioned to see and be seen by the students, and to make sure that time and attention are spread evenly. It is also important to make time for students who need more direction and to support slower learners. If students are struggling with a task it is helpful to find out what the issue is and, if necessary, give extra information or direct them toward new resources. The change from the teacher as the knowledge and direction giver to a supportive facilitator and supplier of resources tends to encourage students in their learning. The mime activity in this study takes pressure away from students because it allows them to be more engaged and, with group members, explore different multimodal features involving their literacy practices. Ivanič et al. (2007: 718) reflecting on committed participation in classwork involving students' literacies suggest:

> When students see literacy practices to be associated with their sense of who they are or who they want to become, they participate in them wholeheartedly. Providing students with opportunities to identify with 'selves' held out by reading and writing activities emerged as a key to harnessing the potential of literacies to enhance learning.

Therefore, teachers need to confidently monitor activities in order to understand student social interactions and behaviour and thereby engage students' identities in the learning process.

Another challenge to employing or experimenting with CLT in the Japanese and some other Asian contexts where silence is a virtue is a natural resistance to speaking in class or participating performatively. Burnaby and Sun (1989) cautioned about complaints from Chinese students accustomed to traditional teacher-student relationships. Modelling or demonstrating CLT activities to students beforehand could help to mitigate possible student embarrassment.

A third challenge is that of giving adequate instruction during the introduction of a communicative activity. Poor instructions can make students uncertain and confused. If instructions are not given carefully, students miss out important features such as the linguistic target of the learning activity. To avoid this, it is useful to follow the principles outlined by Nolasco and Arthur (1998) who suggest giving instructions with gestures and demonstrations and avoiding lengthy explanations. It is also helpful to give instructions in a firm and clear voice, while maintaining eye contact with the whole class, and being clear about when the activity begins.

The instructions used in the mime activity introduce the necessary language for confirming understanding to be used in the activity with phrases such as:

- I guess you are ..., right?
- I think you are . . . Aren't you?
- Are you . . . ?
- You are probably . . . aren't you?
- You might be . . .
- I am sure you are . . . aren't you?
- I am certain you are . . .
- You are definitely (not) . . .
- I would say you are . . .

The language of confirming understanding, taught through this mime activity, is beneficial for developing communicative competence because the activity places emphasis on how language is used outside the classroom. During the activity, students could review the language of confirming understanding using their own 'out of school' literacy practices in a way that could be both hilarious and educative because they could experience their "investments in the target language and their changing identities" (Norton & Kramsch 2000: 133).

Another benefit of exploiting students' literacy practices through mime is that students are given the chance to determine what they want to say independent of the teacher. By doing so a learning environment is created reminiscent of what Gutiérrez (2008) calls 'Third Space'.

> Third Space is more than what students can do with assistance or scaffolding and also more than a historical account of individual discrete events, literacy practices and social interaction within". In Third Space, the teacher and student scripts – the formal and informal, the official and unofficial spaces of the learning environment – intersect, creating the potential for authentic interaction and a shift in the social organization of learning and what counts as learning It is transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened (Gutiérrez et al. 1995 cited in Gutiérrez 2008: 152).

Finally, language teaching utilizing student literacy practices, exposes students to examples of natural language and natural conversation, as opposed to material written for language teaching purposes. Such exposure is evidence that CLT can incorporate the lived experiences of language learners. Mime in the CLT approach gives students the opportunity to effectively use all their language resources because miming allows for improvising, paraphrasing, self-correction, and unpredictability typical of language use outside of the classroom. CLT activities using mime give students the platform by which they can, in the words of Gutiérrez (2008: 148) "begin to reconceive who they are and what might be to accomplish academically and beyond."

8 Conclusion

This study has reported on the use of mime in the English language classroom as an effective way to engage students in communicative activities. Mime utilizes students' literacy practices, engages them as individuals, and influences their language development and communicative competence. Mime is effective as it provides students with motivation to generate language even if this motivation is purely derived from performing their mime in front of other class members. Although some challenges in the implementation of CLT were encountered, it is reasonable to conclude that creativity in students' everyday semiotic practices through the use of mime can be an invaluable resource for learning and teaching and can enhance student communicative competence.

Bibliography

Angouri, Jo (2010): Qualitative or Both? Combining Methods in Linguistics Research. In: Litosseliti, Lia (ed.): *Research Methods in Linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press

Arthur, Lois & Nolasco, Rob (1998): *Large Classes*. London: Macmillan

Barton, David & Hamilton, Mary (1998): *Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community*. London: Routledge

Bilash, Olenka (2009) Best of Bilash: Improving Second Language Education. https://sites.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.bilash/Best%20of%20Bilash/competencyperformance.html [last accessed September 20, 2018]

Butler, Yuko G. & Iino, Masakazu (2005): Current Japanese Reforms in English Language Education: The 2003 'Action Plan'. In: *Language Policy* 4/1, 25-45

Burnaby, Barbara & Sun, Yilin (1989): Chinese Teachers' Views of Western Language Teaching: Context Informs Paradigms. In: *TESOL Quarterly* 23/2, 219-236

Chomsky, Noam (1965): *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Boston: MIT Press

Donnery, Eucharia (2009) Testing the Waters: Drama in the Japanese University EFL Classroom. In: *Scenario* IX/1, 17-33

Dougill, John (1987): *Drama Activities for Language Learning*. London: Macmillan

Gutierrez, Kris (2008): Developing a Socio-Critical Literacy in the Third Space. In: *Reading Research Quarterly* 43/2, 148-164

Gutierrez, Kris; Rymes, Betsy & Larson, Joanne (1995): Script, Counter Script and Under Life in the Classroom. James Brown versus Brown v. Board of Education. In: *Harvard Educational Review* 65, 445-471

Hall, Joan Kelly (2012): *Teaching and Researching: Language and Culture*. Abingdon: Routledge

Halliday, Michael (2004): Three Aspects of Children's Language Development: Learning Language, Learning through Language, Learning about Language. In: Webster, Jonathan (ed.): *Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday*, vol. 4: The Language of Early Childhood. London: Continuum

Heathcote, Dorothy (1984): *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Johnson, Liz & O'Neill, Cecily (eds.): London: Hutchinson

Hymes, Dell (1972): On Communicative Competence. In: Pride, John & Holmes, Janet (eds.): *Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin

Ivanič, Roz; Edwards, Richards; Satchwell, Candice & Smith, June (2007): Possibilities for Pedagogy in Further Education: Harnessing the Abundance of Literacies. In: *British Educational Research Journal* 33/8, 703-721

Kumagai, Yuki (1994): The Effects of Culture on Language Learning and Ways of Communication: The Japanese Case. Master's Capstone Project Center for International Education. University of Massachusetts Amherst

Litosseliti, Lia (2010): *Research Methods in Linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press

Marsh, Jackie (2010): New Literacies, Old Identities: Young Girls' Experiences of Digital Literacy at Home and School. In: Jackson, Carolyn; Paechter, Carrie & Renolds, Emma (eds.): *Girls and Education: Continuing Concerns*. New Agendus, Buckingham: Open University Press, 197-209

Lebra, Takie (1976): *Japanese Patterns of Behaviour*. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii

Li, Danli (2012): Scaffolding Adult Learners of English in Learning Target Forms in a Hong Kong EFL University Classroom. In: *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 6/2, 127-144

Miller, KK (2014): What's Wrong with English Education in Japan? http://www.japantoday.com/category/lifestyle/view/whats-wrong-with-english-education-in-japan-pull-up-a-chair [last accessed December 18, 2017]

Norton, Bonny & Kramsch, Claire (2000): Claiming the Right to Speak in Classrooms and Communities. In: Norton, Bonny (2000): *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change.* London: Pearson Education

Savignon, Sandra (1972): *Communicative Competence: An Experiment in Foreign Language Teaching*. Philadelphia, PA: Centre for Curriculum Development

Tsuchida, Ineko & Lewis, Catherine (1998): Hypotheses about Japanese Elementary Classrooms. In: Rohlen, Thomas & LeTendre, Gerald (eds.): *Teaching and Learning in Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Via, Richard (1987): The Magic 'if' of the Theatre: Enhancing Language Learning through Drama. In: Rivers, Wilga (ed.): *Interactive Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Vygotsky, Lev [translated in 2011]: The Dynamics of the Schoolchild's Mental Development in Relation to Teaching and Learning. In: *Journal of Cognitive Education & Psychology* 10/2, 198-211

Vygotsky, Lev (1978): *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Widdowson, Henry (1978): *Teaching Language as Communication*. London: Oxford University Press

A Appendices

A.1 Appendix 1: Out of school literacy practices (designed by teacher)

- I am at home, bored. Suddenly I get a text message on my phone. I read it and it is from my boyfriend/girlfriend. He/she asks me out. Dress up and leave.
- I am riding a crowded train using my tablet computer to read. The person sitting next to me is falling asleep repeatedly, leaning against me. Frown at it and move away.
- I am in a coffee shop reading a newspaper. A fly flies into my coffee cup. Talk to the shop staff and ask for a refund.
- I am at an airport, checking my flight details on a large screen. I realize I am running late. Rush to the boarding gate.
- The postman delivered a registered envelope to me. I open it and it is not good news. Express sadness.
- I am working part time in a restaurant. Guests come in. Offer them seats and take their orders using an iPad mini.
- I am using my computer, wearing my headphones, enjoying music as I read the lyrics on YouTube. My friend surprises me from behind.
- I am at the bus stop reading the bus schedule. The bus is late. Ask another person at the bus stop what's going on.

A.2 Appendix 2: Out of school literacy practices designed by students (grammatical errors are left uncorrected to reflect the kinds of language challenges students face).

- We went to a pet shop to have a cat. We find a cute cat, but she is dangerous. So, we give up having her.
- A student feels asleep in English class. Another student tries to wake him/her up. The teacher is going to call on the student who is sleeping.
- Girls have glasses and say cheers. A girl takes a picture and post on Instagram.
- I was in the city. Two foreign strangers lost their way. I guided them. They appreciated to me and left.
- In the morning, I was overslept, so I quickly go to the train. My friend waits on the train, but the door was close in front of my face.

- In the shop, the customer bought something, but he forgot it. Another customer told him.

- We are in elevator. A big earthquake happens. Door of elevator not open, we call rescue and we are save.

A.3 Appendix 3: Questionnaire pre-intervention

Dear student: I hope you can spend some minutes of your time to answer the following questions. Please answer honestly each of the following questions about your Junior high school and high school English experiences and study habits, as you get ready to participate in the drama activity of mime. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please circle only one no. (1-5) for each of the items below:

1 = never; 2 = a little, occasionally; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often; 5 = always

Gender: (a) Male (b) Female

Age: (a) 18-19 (b) 20 and above

In Junior high and high school, I had more English lessons with a Japanese teacher than with a native speaker English teacher.	1—2—3—4—5
My Japanese English teacher used mainly English in teaching.	1—2—3—4—5
I was taught reading and writing more than speaking in Junior high and high school.	1—2—3—4—5
I practiced English speaking skills in my English classes in Junior high and high school.	1—2—3—4—5
I was taught English by a native speaker of English.	1—2—3—4—5
My teachers used games or activities out of the textbook to teach.	1—2—3—4—5
I studied English in junior high and high school to prepare for high school and university entrance English exams.	1—2—3—4—5
I was a member of English study activities like drama, speech or debate club.	1—2—3—4—5
I studied English in small groups in Junior high and high school.	1—2—3—4—5
I am satisfied in the way I was taught English in junior high school and high school.	1—2—3—4—5

A.4 Appendix 4: Questionnaire post intervention

Dear student: I hope you can spend some minutes of your time to answer the following questions. Please answer honestly each of the following questions about your English experiences and study habits following your participation in the drama activity of mime. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please circle only one number (1-5) for each of the items below.

1 = not useful at all; 2 = a little useful; 3 = somewhat useful; 4 = useful; 5 = very useful.

Gender: (a) Male (b) Female

Age: (a) 18-19 (b) 20 and above

I think the mime activity was useful in practicing speaking.	1—2—3—4—5
I think mime was useful in improving classroom interaction.	1—2—3—4—5
In subsequent classes I think mime would be useful for improving speaking.	1—2—3—4—5
I think the mime activity was useful in making English fun.	1—2—3—4—5
I think discussing the mime activity was useful in helping with my creativity.	1—2—3—4—5
I think discussing the mime activity was useful in enabling me to incorporate my personal life experiences in the English class.	1—2—3—4—5
I think presenting the mime activity in front of my mates was useful in making me more confident in English.	1—2—3—4—5
I think discussing my out of school experiences through the mime activity with my friends and presenting it in class brought out my identity and made me more motivated to study English.	1—2—3—4—5
I think discussing my out of school experiences through mime was useful in helping me practice the kind of English and situations I will encounter out of school.	1—2—3—4—5
I think discussing the mime activity in small groups made me more active as a learner.	1—2—3—4—5