

SLS 499V

Yukiko Mimoto

August 12, 2013

Effective Pedagogies for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign or Second Language

I am tutoring the Freeman Japan Class at Kapi'olani Community College during this summer. I was tutoring the Freeman Japan Class in 2011 and the teacher who was teaching the class offered me to tutor the class this summer again. In 2011, my life changed, sparked by meeting the teacher, Ms. Kobuke. I learned the joy and significance of teaching Japanese through my tutoring experience and began having my future dream that is to be a Japanese language teacher like her. Therefore, when she offered me to tutor the class again, I was very happy.

About the Freeman Program

The official name of Freeman class is the Freeman Foundation Community College Program. According to the brochure (Freeman Foundation, 2011), Freeman Foundation was established in 1993, after the death of Mansfield Freeman who was one of the founders of the American International Group. Mr. Freeman was an educator and scholar. He emphasized the exchange of ideas in economic and cultural fields between American and East Asian people will help create mutual understanding and lessen the danger of frictions and disagreements that could

lead to war. The Freeman Foundation has supported the establishment of many Asian-related educational programs at American institutions, including Kapi'olani Community College.

The Freeman Japan Class is an intensive two-semester course in Japanese as a Second Language. In the first semester, the students will learn Japanese language and culture five hours a day and five days a week at Kapi'olani Community College. In the second semester, the students who complete the first semester successfully will go to Japan and learn Japanese language and culture at two Japanese universities.

The program is very popular because it offers a scholarship that includes support for tuition, room, books, most meals, round-trip airfare from Honolulu to Japan, local transportation within Japan and stipend, that is to say, the students who win the scholarship can study Japanese language and go to Japan almost for free. This year, more than forty students applied for the program and twelve students were selected.

About the Students

The twelve students in the Freeman Program this year are taking a Japanese language class in the morning and a Japanese culture class in the afternoon during this summer. I am tutoring at the Japanese language class three or four days a week. The composition of the class includes six

female students and six male students, all citizens of the USA. They are also all at beginner's level in Japanese language because one of the Freeman Program's requirements is that all candidates to the program must be American citizens and have no prior-knowledge of the target language (Freeman Foundation, 2011). However, here is Hawaii so their ethnicities are diverse, including Hawaiian, Filipino, Korean, Japanese, African and so on. Some of them who are Japanese-Hawaiian may have some knowledge of Japanese language although the eligibility criteria says no knowledge of target language is required. Thus, although all are within a "beginner" range, I do not think that their levels of Japanese language are equal. They all study Japanese language very hard because to go to Japan, the students need to get at least B grade.

Approaches Used by Ms. Kobuke

In the first three weeks, Ms. Kobuke taught them basic Japanese language using the same order of activities, as shown in the class schedule below.

9:00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T greets Ss 2. T collects HW 3. Quiz
9:30	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T teach new Hiragana or Katakana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the word that includes the new letter and the picture of it • How to read • Stroke order

	<p>2. T gives Ss pictures and word cards and has Ss match the picture w/cards</p> <p>3. T gives Ss cards with each letter written on and has Ss build appropriate words that match w/pictures</p>
10:30	5 minutes Break Time
10:35	<p>Review what Ss learned from the last class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T models the first one or two questions w/asking some Ss • T has Ss do the rest of questions in pairs • T ask each pair to answer the questions in front of the class
10:50	<p>New topics (numbers, sentences, particles, etc) e.g.) the particle “に (ni)” that is put after hour</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T asks some students or tutors the question that includes the new particle “に” 2. T writes a sample question and answer on WB and explains them <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Q: メアリーさんはなん時^①あさごはんをたべますか。</p> <p>A: ごぜん七時^①たべます。 ↑ making time of the action</p> <p>① marks the place that you go, come, or return to.</p> <p><u>② marks the time that you do something.</u></p> </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. T models some questions w/asking some Ss in front of the class 4. T has Ss exercise the rest of questions w/partner 5. T has each pair have the conversations in front of the class
11:25	T shows Ss homework that is written on WB and explain it

She seemed to adopt audio-lingual approach and drill activities (Harmer, 2010) in the first three

weeks. The process of her lectures was routine. It might be because students had to acquire the fundamental knowledge of Japanese at this phase of the course curriculum (i.e., Hiragana, Katakana, and the most simple sentences). I also think that audio-lingual approach and drill activities are appropriate at this phase.

Interestingly, from the fourth week, after she taught all Hiragana and Katakana, she changed her teaching style. The biggest difference is that she stopped giving students a quiz everyday. She still gives them two or three quizzes a week but not everyday, although she gave a quiz everyday until the end of the semester when I was tutoring at Freeman program in 2011.

Instead of quizzes, she started having students play games like below.

Kanji Game:

1. T gives each S a small WB and divide Ss into groups of three
2. T puts herself and tutors into each group
3. T and tutors read Kanji aloud and let Ss write the Kanji on WBs
4. T and tutors give one point to S who writes it the earliest and the most nicely
5. The S who gets the most points is the winner

Karuta Game:

1. T divides Ss into groups of four
2. T puts tutors into each group and gives each group pictures
3. T has Ss spread pictures on the desks
4. Tutor read words aloud and Ss pick the pictures that matches w/the words
5. S who gets the most pictures is the winner

Why did she stop giving students the everyday quiz although she kept giving it at the Freeman program in 2011? Why did she change her teaching style from the fourth week? I asked my advisor, Mr. Harsch, for advice about the questions. He gave me the suggestion that teachers who know themselves know who the students are, their students are not the same every semester, and some teachers blend their teaching style with the students' style. As he said, the students who are in Freeman Program 2013 are very different from those in 2011. The students who were in Freeman Program 2011 were very energetic, upbeat and curious. On the other hand, the students who are in Freeman Program 2013 are gentle, quiet and modest. I really understand what he said. I think that she stopped giving the students who are in Freeman Program 2013 the everyday quiz because the game type quizzes are more suitable for them than the everyday quiz to motivate them more.

I also asked Ms. Kobuke why she changed her teaching style in the middle of semester to confirm if my idea is correct. She said that she adopts eclectic approach. She always tries not to follow one teaching method but choosing the most suitable one for her students. I was impressed because she answered the same thing as what Mr. Harsch said.

She also started giving students more conversation and role-play activities from the fourth

week. She seemed to start to adopt communicative approach (Harmer, 2010) more. I think that it is just because students have already acquired the fundamental knowledge of Japanese. I do not think that she started it to motivate them, because in 2011, she also gradually changed the approach from audio-lingual to communicative.

Questions and Interviews

I had some questions when I was tutoring. The first question is how I should answer when students ask me words, expressions or sentences that they have not learned yet. Some students are very eager to learn Japanese language. They seem to want to express in Japanese everything what they say. They often ask me, “How do you say (ENGLISH SENTENCES) in Japanese?” even though they have not learned the sentences yet. They tend to be superior to the others at speaking naturally and retaining what they study (Ms. Kobuke sometimes uses them as a model when introducing new phrases). I think that it is fine to have intellectual curiosity in Japanese language because it must become the motivation to continue studying it. However, at the same time, I feared that teaching them what they had not learned yet might obstruct the curriculum that Ms. Kobuke planned. I asked Ms. Kobuke about the question. She understood my feelings and said to me that I can answer their questions but she wants me to tell them like, “There are several

expressions of it but I prefer this expression.”

The second question is if I should use a formal expression when I talk with students outside the classroom. Japanese language has two types of expressions. They are a casual expression and a formal expression. The students learn a formal expression at the class. However, if they go to Japan, their Japanese classmates must use a casual expression because we do not use a formal expression between friends. Ms. Kobuke allowed me to use a casual expression when I talk them outside the classroom but she asked me to let them use a formal expression. She said that a tutor is their superior so they should use a formal expression to a tutor.

What I did in the class as a tutor and occasional teacher

As a tutor, I tried to have conversations with students in Japanese. When Ms. Kobuke had students do pair work, I joined it. During the activities, I answered their questions, corrected their mistakes, and gave them hints when they needed help. Ms. Kobuke gave tutors many opportunities to be involved with students, such as, reading words or sentences when she had students play Kanji or Karuta games, or answering her questions in front of students as model conversations after she taught them new grammar or expression. Fortunately, the program offered me meal tickets so I had lunch with them at a cafeteria after the class twice a week.

Ms. Kobuke offered me an opportunity to teach one lesson as an occasional teacher. The topic of the lesson was Strong Prohibition Statements, “~tewaikemasen form (you must not do...form)” I made the lesson plan including outline, handout, slides and script, and asked her to check them before the lesson. I attached the outline below.

Procedure	Time	Purpose of Activities
Introduction 1. Show Ss the priority seat sign that is used in Japan on the PPT and ask them: <i>Do you know this sign?</i> 2. Explain about the sign in Japanese and English 3. Tell Ss: <i>You all are young and healthy so YOU MUST NOT SIT ON PRIORITY SEATS.</i> 4. Tell Ss: <i>We will learn a Strong Prohibition Statement “~tewaikemasen form” today.</i>	3 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce of topic • Establish rapport, friendly atmosphere • Get Ss used to Japanese and my voice
Explanation 1. Explain how to make “~tewaikemasen form”: <i>You can make “~tewaikemasen form” by just adding “waikemasen” after “te-form”.</i> 2. Show the picture that a boy is swimming on PPT, ask Ss what is he doing. Then ask Ss what “te-form” of the verb “swim” is. 3. Show Ss the “No Swimming” sign and “OYOGU (te-form of the verb “swim”) + tewaikemasen” on PPT and ask Ss: How do you say “you must not swim in Japanese?” 4. Do step 2 and 3 for 4 more verbs	3 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate schema and brainstorm vocabularies related to the topic • Build confidence in the topic by reviewing how to make “te-form” that they learned last class
Activity 1 1. Give Ss handout and ask Ss: <i>Let’s practice exercise I!</i> (Change the 5 sentences to Strong Prohibition statements) 2. Model first two questions on PPT and ask Ss: <i>Please answer the remaining three questions with your partner.</i> 3. Ask three Ss to answer each question in front of the class to check answer together	9 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model task • Create a safe and comfortable learning environment through peer learning and collaboration
Activity 2 1. Ask Ss: <i>Let’s practice exercise II!</i> (ask your partner if it is all right to do the twelve things) 2. Model first three questions by asking tutors and ask	15 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model task • Create a safe and comfortable learning environment through

<p>Ss: <i>Please ask and answer the remaining nine things with partner.</i></p> <p>3. Ask each pair to ask and answer each question in front of the class to check answer together</p>		<p>peer learning and collaboration</p>
--	--	--

When I made the lesson plan, I tried to use sentences that include Japanese manners as much as possible, for example, you must not wear a hat in the room and you must not sit on the desk. I also showed them the priority seat sign that is used in Japan as introduction. I wanted to introduce them something that will help them when they go to Japan through my lesson. I copied Ms. Kobuke's teaching style so I adopted eclectic approach.

After my lesson, Ms. Kobuke gave me some feedback of my lesson. She paid me a compliment on my teaching like, I looked like a real teacher. She said to me as good points: 1. My English and Japanese were clear, 2. The voice and speed of my speech, 3. The scaffolding of my lesson, 4. I repeated what students said to make other students understand it, 5. I chose the sentence "Is it all right to drink alcohol at school?" that interested students as the first question and modeled it with tutor who is the around seventy-year old Japanese woman because a funny question motivate students in a positive way. As a bad point, she said that I was sometimes too quick to change slides. She said that I should leave more time in between changing slides. She offered me the opportunity of teaching one more lesson. I was very happy to hear that.

Conclusion

I learned a lot of things through the experience of tutoring the Freeman Japan class this summer. I learned the joy and significance of teaching Japanese when I was tutoring it in 2011 and I strengthened them this summer. The biggest difference between what I learned in 2011 and 2013 is that in 2013, I was able to analyze what approaches Ms. Kobuke adopted. I was able to realize that Ms. Kobuke changed her teaching style in the middle of semester because I am majoring in Second Language Studies and studying teaching language methods and approaches. I did not know the term “eclectic approach” until I heard it from her. It might be one of the most important things what I learned from this experience. I would like to adopt this approach when I teach Japanese in the future. To adopt this approach, I have to study many teaching language methods and approaches, and understand the merits and demerits of them. Without the knowledge, I cannot determine which approach is the most suitable for students.

The words “teachers who know themselves know who the students are, their students are not the same every semester, and some teachers blend their teaching style with the students’ style” that Mr. Harsch told me made a deep impression on me. Ms. Kobuke is exactly the teacher whom Mr. Harsch mentioned. I would like to be one of the teachers who know themselves and

who the students are. Then, I would like to be a teacher who always tries to find the most effective pedagogy for the students.

References

Freeman Foundation. (2011). *Study Abroad!: The Freeman Foundation Community College Program*.

Harmer, J. (2010). *How to Teaching English*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.