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Comparative Study of Elementary School English Classes in Japan and the Philippines

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日本とフィリピンの小学校英語授業の比較研究

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ABSTRACT

Elementary English education officially begun in Japan in 2011. English became compulsory for the fifth and sixth graders. In the Philippines, a new curriculum began in June 2012 when English was no longer a medium of instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3. It is now just one of the subjects taught from Grades 1 to 3. This study aims to find out the differences in elementary school English teaching in both countries and to examine how they are related to the curriculum, language policies and other factors affecting English education. To attain this, one video of a class in each country was analyzed using COLT Part A. Results revealed that there are similarities and differences in teaching English in elementary schools in both countries. These differences are affected by the different factors concerning English education. This paper aims to point out significant differences in English education between Japan and the Philippines which may suggest new perspectives for educators, policy makers and aspiring teachers of both countries to reflect upon. These suggestions will hopefully contribute in some ways to the improvement of English education system in both countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is fast becoming a world-wide language which makes it necessary for people to acquire it for plenty of reasons. In her book *The First Word: the Search for the Origins of*

Language, Christine Kenneally (2007) wrote that “English is the single most dominant language in the world which can be attributed to British colonialism and the global reach of American power”. Furthermore, David Crystal (2003) stated that English is now the language

most widely taught as a foreign language and in most of these countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools, often displacing another language in the process (pp. 3-27).

The status of English in Japan and in the Philippines is different. In Japan, it is a foreign language and is used in limited situations. On the other hand, it is one of the official languages in the Philippines and is used on a daily basis.

Japan has one of the efficient educational systems in the world as shown in its excellent international performances in math and science. This has been one of the many reasons that Japan continues to attract foreign teachers to Japan to observe classes and learn best techniques in teaching. Furthermore, the Japanese government provides assistance to selected teachers from other countries to conduct studies of the Japanese educational system. In this way, Japan is hoping to share its best practices with other countries to improve theirs. The Philippines, being one with a developing educational system, benefits a lot from these kinds of opportunities.

This research aims to benefit both countries since it is mainly focused on English education, which is not as good as science and math in Japan. In fact, the results of the TOEFL test (2013) revealed that Japan placed 135th out of 165 countries while the Philippines placed 37th. Both countries have their issues and concerns regarding English education. Thus, this study aims to provide insights for teachers and policy makers in both countries. These insights hopefully can be of help in order to improve English education in both countries.

2. BACKGROUND

Japan and the Philippines are Asian countries and were under American rule for some time. However, there are plenty of differences which affect English language learning. Some of these issues will be discussed in this chapter from the viewpoints of history, policies, English use outside the classroom, objectives and contents of the curriculum, and elementary English teachers.

2.1 History of English Education in Japan and the Philippines

Japan and the Philippines share some similar events in history. America occupied both countries and brought English into these island countries.

2.1.1 History of English Education in Japan

English language education started in Japan in 1854, when it entered into the Treaty of Peace and Amity with the United States and opened its ports to the West. The policy of the Meiji Era is the westernization of Japan and English was viewed as a means to acquire western knowledge. Thus the Ministry of Education sent students to the western countries to acquire foreign knowledge in 1871. These students came back and started to teach English at universities. They also started translating the technical terms in various fields into Japanese, compiling them into academic books and teaching them to Japanese students in Japanese. With these, the English language education declined and became just a means to enter university, not a means to access Western culture and knowledge.

During the Taisho Era (1912-1925), the Japanese government invited H.E. Palmer from

the United Kingdom to contribute to English language education in Japan. He introduced the oral method. The purpose of English education during that time was to prepare for examination focused on grammatical analyses and translations into Japanese. Towards the end of this era, English education continued to decline and a movement to abolish the teaching of English became occupant.

The Showa Period (1926–1988) has seen a lot of changes and developments of the English education. The World War II spurred anti-English sentiments among the Japanese which resulted in the abolition of English education. However, when Americans occupied Japan after the war, English language lessons resumed in junior high schools. Moreover, Japanese economy grew and businesses needed employees who are able to conduct international transactions. This inspired the beginning of the Practical English proficiency examination in 1963. With the aim to cultivate the students' practical English skills, the government continued to invite English language teachers from foreign countries. However, there were no significant changes in the curriculum; the traditional translation method was still used and the goal of the English education was still to help students pass the entrance examinations.

In 1964, the Olympics took place in Japan and sometime in 1970s, almost two million Japanese went abroad. These events motivated the people to learn English and motivated the teachers to try out new approaches to teaching English. Thus, the Communicative Approach started to be popular in the mid 1980's. In addition, the JET (Japanese Exchange and Teaching) Program was started and foreign nationals were hired as language instructors for junior and senior high schools with the aim of improving

FLA (Foreign Language Acquisition) in Japan.

The Heisei era (1989–present) is a time when the people were more exposed to English and had more chances to meet native speakers. According to Fujimoto-Adamson (2006), the JET Program and the Internet are considered as the most significant and influential events that affected people's motivations to learn practical English. The purpose of English language education shifted from academic English to practical English. However, the value of learning English to pass the entrance examinations still exists until today.

Before 2011, English education started in the first year of junior high school. It is offered as one of the elective foreign languages in the junior high school curriculum. However, in 2003, the MEXT stated that "for compulsory foreign language instruction, English should be selected in principle".

English language instruction in the elementary schools officially started in 2011 and it became compulsory for the fifth and six graders. This class is officially called "*Gaikokugo Katsudou*" (Foreign Language Activities). It involves English language activities which aim to cultivate experience-based understanding and rote learning of linguistic elements is not recommended.

2.1.2 History of English Education in the Philippines

This country traces back its' history of English education to 1895 when the Americans took control over the archipelago from the Spaniards ending their 374 years of occupation. In 1901, Act No. 74 was implemented because of a severe shortage of qualified teachers, and thus the Philippine Commission authorized the secretary of public instruction to bring more

than one thousand teachers from the US. They were scattered throughout the islands to establish schools, and thus English-medium instruction began. According to McArthur (2002), English was made the language of instruction and also adopted for newspapers and magazines, the media and literary writing.

When World War II broke out, the Japanese seized the country from the Americans. The Military Order No. 2 in 1942 embodied the Japanese educational policies with principles to promote friendly relations between Japan and the Philippines, foster a new Filipino culture based education, elevate the morals of the people, diffuse the Japanese language in the Philippines, promote vocational education and inspire people with the spirit to love neighbors. During this period, all textbooks were censored and revised, and English was abolished as a subject and medium of instruction. Nihongo was used and people were prohibited from using the English language.

After the war, English was again used as the medium of instruction and the situation continued even after the Philippines gained independence from the United States. In the 1980's, Filipino was made the national language but English remained in an elevated status.

In 1987, the new constitution prescribed the use of both Filipino and English as official languages of communication and instruction. Even with proposals to abolish English use in schools, it remains to be the country's language of science, math, education, medicine and other fields.

In 2011, the Department of Education started to implement the new K to 12 Educational System. Its greatest feature regarding English education is the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-

MLE), which imposes the use of the children's first language as the medium of instruction in all subjects from Kindergarten to Grade 3. English will only be taught from the 3rd quarter in Grade 1. From Grade 4, Math, English and Science will be taught in English in public schools.

2.2 Policies on Elementary English Education in Japan and the Philippines

The policies on English education play the most important role in English education because they determine the goals, objectives, contents, time allotment and methods.

2.2.1 Japan

The first guidelines for the nationwide implementation of foreign language teaching in elementary schools were set in 1996. This implemented foreign language education as part of the international understanding studies in the "Period for Integrated Study" or "Special Activities" for a maximum of two hours a week.

In 2002, MEXT presented a new strategic concept to improve students' oral communication ability in English and to cultivate Japanese with English abilities. An action plan was designed in 2003 which included a series of specific strategies to realize the 2002 concept. It was to establish continuous English education from elementary through lower and upper secondary levels and comprehensive pre and in-service training for English teachers at all school levels.

Another change happened in 2008, when MEXT revised the national curriculum for compulsory education and decided to introduce English education as Foreign Language Activities in the 5th and 6th grades from school year 2011 onward. This made English (FLA)

compulsory. The guidelines stated: “in principle, a ‘foreign language’ refers to English and 35 teaching hours are required to be set aside per year for 5th and 6th graders.”

2.2.2 Philippines

Language policies implemented in the Philippines are based on Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution. Section 6 of this article provides that the national language of the Philippines is Filipino while Section 7 provides that for purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and English.

The Philippine Bilingual Education Policy was first implemented in 1974 by Department Order No.25 titled “Implementing Guidelines for the Policy on Bilingual Education” and was further enhanced in 1987 through Department Order No.52 known as Policy on Bilingual Education. This policy aims at the achievement of competence in both Filipino and English at the national level through the teaching of both languages and their use as media of instruction at all levels.

In 2011, the latest change in the policies on elementary English education began with the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum. This curriculum is the Department of Education’s great step to reform education in the country. K to 12 Curriculum made kindergarten compulsory to all children, added 2 more years to basic education (from 10 years to 12 years) and implemented the mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE). The MTB-MLE mandates the use of the learners’ first language as the medium of instruction in all subjects, except in English and Filipino (not the first language of most Filipino children) from Kindergarten to Grade 3. In addition, it imposes

that English will only be introduced from the 3rd quarter in Grade 1.

2.3 English Use Outside the Classroom in Japan and the Philippines

One undeniably important factor that contributes much to second language acquisition is the learner’s exposure to the target language. This section focuses on English use outside the classroom.

2.3.1 English Use in Japan

English is a foreign language in Japan. This means that the learners have a very limited chance to use or get English input outside the classroom. They only hear and speak it during English class which is done once a week or when they attend a cram school which is very popular in Japan. Though there are plenty of foreigners in Japan, these foreigners more often than not, communicate with the Japanese in Japanese. Therefore, whatever English phrases or skills are learned in class, there is very little chance to put these into actual practice outside the classroom.

According to the Japan Times (May 10, 2014), students study about English but do not use it sufficiently for more meaningful activities and many have never spoken English out loud during years of study.

2.3.2 English Use in the Philippines

In the Philippines, English has been widely used for more than a hundred years now. It has been the language of commerce, science and education and is one of the two official languages of the country; the other one is Filipino. Children have a lot of chances to use English in real context - at home, with peers, and many places outside the classroom. Most

signs, story books, newspapers and magazines are written in English, most movies suited or enjoyed by children are in English, and even some broadcasts are done in English. A Filipino child usually receives a lot of English input from birth since many English phrases are already adapted in the society and parents tend to use them with infants. Some of the examples are “clap your hands”, “come to Mama”, “no good”, “come here”, “stop that” and many more. Usually, by the time a child enters elementary school, he/she already has a vocabulary of English words which includes parts of the body, names of animals or objects, action verbs and simple adjectives and phrases which include polite expressions, nursery rhymes and simple questions. However, even if English is used in everyday life, the Filipino children’s mother tongue is not English. This is just the second, third or even fourth language to them. Nevertheless, in the Philippines, English is considered a second language, and thus there is a chance to use or hear the language in a daily basis.

In an article written by Kenneth Rapoza entitled “*Countries with the Best Business English*”, he claimed that “the Philippines has taken over India as a hub for call centres. The islands attained a score above 7 [on a scale of 1 to 10], putting them within the range of a high proficiency that indicates an ability to lead business discussions and perform complex tasks”. Furthermore, Kate McGeown reported on BBC News that the Philippines is fast becoming the world’s low-cost English language teacher – with rapid increase in overseas students coming to learn English or study in English-speaking universities. According to McGeown, much cheaper lessons and a convincing US accent are bringing an increasing

number of students to learn English in the Philippines.

2.4 Objectives of the Elementary English Curriculum in Japan and the Philippines

2.4.1 Japan

The objectives of elementary English education in Japan are embodied in Chapter 4 of the Course of Study categorized as Foreign Language Activities and intended for Grades 5 and 6. Its overall objectives are to form the foundation of pupils’ communication abilities through foreign languages while developing the understanding of languages and cultures through various experiences, fostering a positive attitude toward communication, and familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expression of foreign languages.

2.4.2 Philippines

The K to 12 Curriculum Guide for English embodies the objectives of English education in the Philippines.

The main objectives of English education are communicative competence and multi-literacy. Its ultimate goal is to produce graduates who apply the language conventions, principles, strategies and skills in (1) interacting with others, (2) understanding and learning other content areas, and (3) fending for themselves in whatever field of endeavour they may engage in.

As stated in the curriculum guide,

“the curriculum aims to help learners acquire highly-developed literacy skills that enable them to understand that English is the most widely used medium of communication in Trade and the Arts, Sciences, Mathematics and in world economy. Furthermore, it aims to help

learners understand that English language is a dynamic social process which responds to and reflects changing social conditions, and that English is inextricably involved with values, beliefs and ways of thinking about ourselves and the world we dwell in. Through multi-literacy skills, learners will be able to appreciate and be sensitive to socio-cultural diversity and understand that the meaning of any form of communication depends on context, purpose and audience (K to 12 Curriculum Guide in English, p.7).

2.5 Contents of the Elementary English Curriculum in Japan and the Philippines

2.5.1 Japan

The contents of Foreign Language Activities are intended for Grades 5 and 6 in public elementary schools in Japan. These are exclusively focused on oral language wherein learners should be helped to actively engage in communication in a foreign language. This is to enable learners to experience the joy of communication in the foreign language, actively listen to and speak in the foreign language and

to learn the importance of verbal communication. In addition, it also aims for the pupils to deepen their experiential understanding of the languages and cultures of Japan and foreign countries. In order to attain this, learners are to be instructed to become familiar with the sounds and rhythms of the foreign language, to know its differences from the Japanese language, and to be aware of the interesting aspects of language and its richness. Furthermore, they should be able to find the differences in ways of living, customs and events between Japan and foreign countries and to be aware of various points of view and ways of thinking. They are also expected to experience communication with people of different cultures and to deepen the understanding of cultures.

2.5.2 Philippines

The contents of English education for elementary schools are contained in Table 1 as learning standards expected to be attained in each grade level. These are divided into several competencies. For Grade 1, there are five

Table 1 *Grade Level Standards in Elementary English Education in the Philippines*

Grade Level	GRADE LEVEL STANDARDS
1	The learner listens for comprehension, speaks clearly and uses appropriate expressions in talking about oneself, family, and other social context interactions
2	The learner listens critically to one-two paragraphs; use appropriate expressions in varied situations; read texts for pleasure and information critically in meaningful thought units; responds properly to environmental prints like signs, posters, commands and requests; and writes legibly simple sentences and messages in cursive form
3	The learner listens critically to get information from text heard, demonstrates independence in using the basic language structure in oral and written communication, and reads with comprehension
4	The learner listens critically to news reports and other radio broadcasts and expresses ideas accurately in oral and written forms; demonstrates confidence in the use of the language to meet everyday's needs; and reads independently and gets relevant information from various text types
5	The learner listens critically to different text types; express ideas logically in oral and written forms; and demonstrates interest in reading to meet various needs
6	The learner listens critically; communicate feelings and ideas orally and in writing with a high level of proficiency; and reads various text types materials to serve learning needs in meeting a wide range of life's purposes

competencies - listening comprehension (LC), oral language (OL), phonological awareness (PA), grammar (G) and vocabulary development (V). Reading is learned in Grade 2, and thus book and print knowledge (BPK), alphabet knowledge (AK), attitude (A) and study strategy (SS) are included.

From Grade 3, PA, BPK, and AK are replaced with reading comprehension (RC), fluency (F), phonics and word recognition and spelling (PWR) and writing/composition (WC). In Grades 4 to 6, PWR is removed, SS is changed to Study Strategy Research and viewing (VC) is included.

2.6 English Language Teachers in the Elementary Schools in Japan and the Philippines

2.6.1 Language Teachers in Japan

English classes in Japan are usually taught by homeroom teachers who are inexperienced and with no specialized skills in English teaching. The Japan Times reported that since 2007, “the Government has started training all of the nation’s approximately 400,000 elementary school teachers in teaching English but surveys show that many of them lack the confidence to lead such lessons. Many schools don’t have teachers with specialized skills in English education and some homeroom teachers will have to teach English even if they lack understanding of the language”.

Some schools have native speakers, called assistant language teachers (ALTs) employed to assist language classes. In the schools without ALTs, it is the responsibility of the homeroom teacher to teach English.

2.6.2 Language Teachers in the Philippines

In the same way, English classes in elementary schools in the Philippines are mostly

conducted by the homeroom teachers. Most of these teachers are neither specialized English teachers nor trained to teach English. They teach English along with all the other subjects.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the observations in the previous chapter, there are many differences between the two countries with regards to English education. This study attempts to answer the following questions:

Question 1: What are the factors that affect the English education in both countries?

Question 2: What are the different features of English class activities in Japan and the Philippines?

Question 3: What are the relationships between the different factors and the different features revealed in Questions 1 and 2?

4. METHODS

4.1 Material

The materials used in this study are videos of English classes in Japan and the Philippines. The 50-minutes long Japanese class was recorded in June 2013. The Philippine class was recorded in November 2014 and is 30-minutes long.

The students in this study were all in their second year of English learning- Grade 6 in Japan and Grade 2 in the Philippines. Both teachers in these classes are females and are homeroom teachers, not specialized language teachers.

The Japanese class is a Grade 6 class in a school affiliated with a teacher training university in Hokkaido. This affiliated school has special English education programs which are

not yet adopted by other public elementary schools which make their English classes special.

The Philippine class was conducted by a female public elementary school teacher of a public school in Baguio City. In this school, the students speak different languages and were divided according to their first language. This class uses Filipino but not all of the students are native Filipino speakers. Some are just included here for even distribution of pupils into 4 language groups.

4.2 Procedure

The recorded videos were watched many times before they were coded using COLT Part A. After coding, the videos were again watched several times while going over the results to make sure the materials were coded properly.

After coding, the percentages of all features of COLT Part A were calculated and the global score (GS) was computed. Lastly, the relationship of the results of COLT observation and the different factors affecting English education were analyzed.

4.3 COLT

Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) was introduced as a medium to try to describe the communicative orientation of language teaching and to determine how this contributes to differences in L2 learning outcomes (Spada & Lyster 1997, p. 788).

COLT observation scheme has 2 parts – Part

A and Part B. Part A describes classroom events at the level of episodes and activities while Part B analyses the communicative features of verbal exchanges between the teacher and students or students and students as they occur within each episode or activity (Allen, 1983).

This study uses Part A of the COLT observation scheme.

5. RESULTS

In order to provide analysis of both classes, they were first observed generally by noting the impressive evaluations. After that, the COLT scheme proposed by Spada and Fröhlich (1995) was used.

5.1 General Observations in each Class

General observations were conducted before using COLT Part A. As a result, four major features were found out – technology use, language use, student tasking and material. They are illustrated in Table 2.

5.1.1 Japanese Class

The Japanese class observed has a lot of unique features. The first of this is on technology use where almost all the activities in class were ICT-assisted. They include the use of recorded audio materials, videos, and interaction boards to aid learning and provide Japanese translations of English phrases and

Table 2 *General Observed Features of the Japanese and Philippine English Classes*

Area of Difference	Japanese Class	Philippine Class
Technology Use	ICT assisted class	Traditional chalk and board
Language use	Japanese most of the time	Almost all in English
Student tasking	Group oriented, all oral	Mostly individual work, oral and written
Materials	Pictures, big book, audio and visual material, ALT	Real objects

sentences. Furthermore, all the students were equipped with iPad for individual tasks and practices.

In the case of language use, Japanese was used most of the time – in giving instructions/directions for tasks, translating the meaning of English sentences and giving feedback at the end of the lesson. English was used during greeting.

Group work is dominant in carrying out tasks. The students worked with pairs to further practice the English words and phrases. Individual work was done during the practice using their iPads and in preparing reflections after the lesson. Almost all activities were done orally.

Another strong feature of this class includes the use of various materials. Audio materials were provided for students to repeat: TV, PC, iPad are furnished to aid learning and colourful pictures and big picture books were used. These materials come with English translations.

Other features include an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher), a native English speaker who modelled English words, phrases and sentences for the students to follow and read the English story in the big picture book. After classes, students reflected and evaluated the class which served as a venue for students to express their thoughts and gives the teacher some basis to improve the class. This was done mainly in written and spoken Japanese.

5.1.2 Philippine Class

The Philippine class also has its unique features. One of them is the use of English all the time. The students used English in answering the questions and even the materials used were written only in English.

Another feature is that the only source of

models for English words and phrases was the homeroom teacher. Moreover, the class made use of the traditional chalk and board and the reading material was written on the board. The material used was an original composition of the homeroom teacher. In addition, the class made use of real objects inside and outside the classroom.

With regards to tasks, most of them were done individually. Written seatwork done individually at the end of the lesson as an evaluation to test if the objective of the lesson is attained is common in Philippine classes. This is to evaluate the students' mastery of the subject matter in order to provide the necessary interventions, whether to re-teach or provide remediation, reinforcement or enrichment activities. However, pair work was also done when pupils were tasked to make their own sentences using the target expressions.

Another feature of this class is the restriction of choral recitation in answering questions. Pupils had to wait until called before they answer.

5.2 Results of COLT Part A

In order to provide an objective and quantitative analysis of both classes, the COLT scheme proposed by Spada and Fröhlich (1995) was used. In this scheme, a more detailed result for each feature can be obtained and a clearer picture can be drawn out.

5.2.1 Observation on Participant Organization

As shown in Table 3, both classes used more than half of the class time for teacher to student/class interactions. The Japanese class used 50.8% of the 50-minute class time for teacher to student/class interactions. The Philippine class utilized 54.2% of the 30-minute

Table 3 *Results of Observation on Participant Organization*

PARTICIPANT ORGANIZATION		JAPANESE	PHILIPPINE
CLASS	Teacher ⇔ Student	50.8%	54.2%
	Student ⇔ Student	1.9%	9.1%
	Choral	8.3%	4.3%
GROUP	Same Task	21.9%	5.6%
	Different Task	0%	0%
INDIVIDUAL	Same Task	17%	26.8%
	Different Task	0%	0%

Table 4 *Results of Observation on Content*

CONTENT		JAPANESE	PHILIPPINE
Management	Procedure	22.6%	5.6%
	Discipline	0%	0%
Language	Form	53.1%	34.8%
	Function	0%	0%
	Discourse	0%	0%
	Sociolinguistic	0%	0%
Other Topics	Narrow	24.3%	59.7%
	Broad	0%	0%

class time for teacher to student/class interactions.

Furthermore, the Japanese class had more percentage for group tasks than individual tasks. Group task made use of 21.9% of the class time while 17% was used for individual same task. Meanwhile, there was much more individual than group task in the Philippine class.

The Japanese class utilized the least time for student to student/class interactions with 1.9% of the total class time. On the other hand, the Philippine class used the least time for choral (8.3%).

5.2.2 Observation on Content

There is a characteristic difference between the two classes with regards to content. The Japanese class mainly focused on form while the

Philippine class mainly focused on narrow topics.

Table 4 illustrates that more than half of the class time in the Japanese class focused exclusively on language form at 53.1%. For example, one activity engaged the students in repeating the names of the pictures after the ALT. The Japanese class used this type of activities very often. With regards to meaning-focused activities, narrow topics used 24.3% of the class time. These activities include listening to a story, answering comprehension questions about the story and asking and answering questions using “can you” during the tasks done by pairs. Procedure has the lowest percentage at 22.6%, and it was mainly given in Japanese.

In the Philippine class, more than half of the class time (59.7%) was used for narrow topics. One such example was the activity where the

students were tasked to make their own sentences using the chunk words “this is” and “that is”. Language, specifically form, used 34.8% of the time while only 5.6% was used for procedure.

5.2.3 Observation on Content Control

There is no significant difference between the two classes in terms of content control of the lesson.

As seen in Table 5, teacher/text controlled most of the contents in both classes with 73.4% in the Japanese class and 72.7% in the Philippine class. Contents controlled by teacher/text/student were 26.6% in the Japanese class and

27.3% in the Philippine class.

5.2.4 Observation on Student Modality

Table 6 shows the differences on student modality. Both classes spent most of the time on listening and least on speaking. However, differences were seen on the other categories, namely reading, writing and others. There were no reading and writing activities in the Japanese class while reading and writing were done in the Philippine class. Moreover, the Japanese class spent the second most time of the class using Japanese while Filipino was not used in the Philippine class.

Table 5 *Results of Observation on Content Control*

CONTENT CONTROL	JAPANESE	PHILIPPINE
Teacher/Text	73.4%	72.7%
Teacher/Text/Student	26.6%	27.3%
Student	0%	0%

Table 6 *Results of Observation on Student Modality*

STUDENT MODALITY	JAPANESE	PHILIPPINE
Listening	51.4%	63.9%
Speaking	20.1%	6.1%
Reading	0%	16.6%
Writing	0%	13.4%
Others (Japanese, Filipino)	28.6%	0%

Table 7 *Results of Observation on Materials*

MATERIALS		JAPANESE	PHILIPPINE
TYPE	Minimal Text	50.8%	33.5%
	Extended Text	26.6%	11.7%
	Audio	19.9%	0%
	Visual	29.5%	53.2%
SOURCE	L2-NNS	80.3%	45.2%
	L2-NS	0%	0%
	L2-NSA	0%	0%
	Student-made	0%	0%

5.2.5 Observation on Materials

For the types of materials used in class, both classes used minimal texts (words, phrases, one sentence) more often than extended texts (more than two sentences).

Table 7 shows that the Japanese class mostly used minimal text followed by visual. Meanwhile, the Philippine class used visual materials most followed by minimal text. In addition, the Japanese class used audio materials but the Philippine class did not.

All of these materials were intended for L2 non-native speakers at 80.3% and 45.2% in the Japanese and Philippine classes, respectively.

6. DISCUSSION

After looking into some of the factors affecting English education and observing the two classes, it is evident that there are much more differences than similarities between Japan and the Philippines.

6.1 Factors affecting English language education in Japan and the Philippines

The history of English education in both countries had been influenced by Americans during their rule. However, the Philippines has a much longer history – not only studying English but using it for many purposes.

The greatest factor affecting the English education is perhaps the policies, objectives and contents of the curriculum. It is because they determine the length, contents and targets of English education which influences the strategies and activities employed by teachers and even the motivation of learners. The main goal of English education in Japan is communicative abilities. In the Philippines, the ultimate goal is the mastery of English as a tool

in many situations. These goals are the reason why English is an activity in Japan while it is both a subject and a medium of instruction for several subjects in the Philippines.

It cannot be denied that the society also plays a vital role in moulding the language abilities of learners who need as much support as they can get. Learners also need to experience the importance of what they are learning in English class by putting it into practice. English in Japan is a foreign language and people can interact with any other Japanese because the country is monolingual. The situation is different in the Philippines. As a multilingual nation with more than 170 languages, people need another language in order to communicate with Filipinos from another island. This is where Filipino and English comes in, thus both are a second or a third language and are the official languages in the Philippines.

6.2 Different Features of English Class Activities in Japan and the Philippines

The result of COLT observation revealed that the English classes in Japan and the Philippine elementary schools are teacher-centered. Teachers used most of the class time for teacher-to-student interaction and most of the contents are teacher/text-controlled. It also revealed that both classes made use of minimal texts more than extended texts.

The differences were seen on other features of COLT. The Japanese class conducted more group work while the Philippine class did more individual work. As to content, the Japanese class focused more on form while the Philippine class focused more on meaning. The results of student modality also revealed that the Japanese class used others (that is, Japanese) while the Philippine class did not use any language aside

from English. Furthermore, the Philippine class had reading and writing activities while the Japanese class did not.

6.3 Relationships between the different factors affecting English education and the different features of English class activities

The results of COLT reflect the different factors affecting English education in the two countries. They especially reflect the policies, objectives and contents of the English education curriculum in both countries. This is because everything done in class is determined and controlled by the English curriculum.

The results of participant organization show that both classes are teacher-controlled. It is because in this level, the teachers have to do a lot of modelling and have to make sure that the students understand what they are supposed to do. Another common result is that listening has the greatest allocation in student modality, which results from teacher-centred style. Since the teacher talks more, the students listen more.

On the other hand, the two classes differ when it comes to the other features of participant organization. In Japan, there was more group work because the goal of English language education, which is communicative abilities, require conversation practices, thus pair work is commonly used. On the other hand, the Philippines had more individual work because seatwork after every lesson as an assessment tool is mostly used in Philippine English classes.

For content, the two observed classes have significant differences. The Japanese class activities focused more on form than on meaning. The Philippine class, on the other hand, focused more on narrow topics. These results have something to do with the lesson

conducted that day. The target expression for the Japanese class was “can” and “can’t” and involved lots of practices of the form. More was allotted to form because many example expressions were provided and the pupils just repeated them. The topic of the Philippine class was the concept and use of “that is” and “this is”. Most of the tasks required the pupils to use them to produce their own sentences, thus focus was on the meaning of the students’ utterances.

On the question of who controls the class, the results revealed that both classes were teacher controlled. The teacher/text mainly controlled the contents in both classes. The results may be attributed to the level of the learners who were all in their second year of English learning. Controlling the content may be difficult for the learners who still lack sufficient knowledge and skills in the language.

In student modality, both classes allotted the most of the time for listening and just a little time for speaking. However, the Japanese class spent much time in using Japanese (Others), which had the second greatest percentage, while the use of Filipino in the Philippine class was not noticed. The use of Japanese was high in the Japanese class because the instructions for tasks were done in Japanese, translations were provided to convey the meaning of the sentences used and there was a reflection/evaluation of the class which was purely done in Japanese. These can be influenced by the students’ limited exposure to the language. Because the Japanese students have very little vocabulary in English, Japanese is often used to communicate meaning. In the Philippine class, the learners have more exposure to the language and can understand simple English, thus translation is not necessary. In addition, the policy of multilingualism encourages the use of

English in English classes as to force students to use and polish their skills in the language. The mother tongue should be used as the last resort to convey meaning. Furthermore, the English used in class was considered simple for the learners who received much input from early childhood.

In addition, the Japanese class did not engage in reading and writing activities while these almost equally had the second greatest percentage in the Philippine class. These results are attributed to the goal of English education. The goal of elementary English education in Japan is mainly on oral communication and therefore it does not engage in reading and writing. In contrast, the goals in the Philippines include fluency and ability to read and write in the target language. Therefore, reading and writing are as important as speaking and listening. In addition, the curriculum states that reading and writing in English starts from Grade Two.

The materials used in both classes are very different. The Japanese class utilized modern technology and better quality of printed materials. The Philippine class used materials which can be seen as very obsolete as compared with Japan. Modern technology use in the Japanese class includes the use of iPads, which were supplied to all students. TV, audio-visual materials and the interaction board were also used. The printed materials were of better quality in the sense that the pictures used were colourful and laminated and a coloured big book was used. The Philippine class utilized real objects - objects inside and outside the classroom. For printed materials, the poem used was written on the blackboard and the written activity was printed out on paper by the teacher.

The observed differences might be attributed to the support which the government gives to schools. It can be said that Japanese government supports schools well in Japan in terms of the quality of teaching materials used and the presence of technological equipments/devices to aid learning.

In the Philippines, most public schools are not equipped with technology to aid in learning. If teachers want to use some equipments/devices in their classes, they have to either buy these with their own money, borrow from those who have these materials or solicit others to get them. Even big books are not issued to all schools - teachers have to make their own using their own money. Teachers always spend a portion of their meagre salary for materials to use to prepare their teaching aids. Most schools in the country lack necessary materials to aid learning. As observed in the class, the material was written on the blackboard. This is mainly because the board is the only available tool, and partly because the poem/jingle was an original composition of the teacher. In addition, even textbooks that are congruent to the new curriculum are still not issued. The new curriculum is different from the old and thus the old books cannot be used in class.

7. CONCLUSION

Elementary English Education in both countries still has plenty of rooms for improvements. Since the elementary schools foster the foundations of basic abilities, they greatly influence English learning.

In Japan, it is time to take elementary English education seriously and venture into new ideas of improving it. The different factors affecting language learning should be taken into

consideration in planning and implementing future English education policies. In this way, Japanese learners would acquire better communication skills in the target language. They might also excel in English as well as they do in mathematics and science.

The Philippines also has a lot of flaws in its English education. It faces even more challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum. Many fear that with the abolishment of English as the medium of instruction in the 4 earliest years of formal schooling, the English abilities of Filipinos will be in chaos. However, this is one step the country is trying to take in order to address the poor performance of students in mathematics and science and to retain the richness of Philippine culture which includes the languages. The challenge now for English education is to help learners master English without displacing or messing up the mother tongue which is currently what's happening. Multilingualism should not make English superior over any of the minority languages in the country.

This study has some limitations. First, the two observed classes differ in terms of preparation. The Japanese teacher prepared well for the class because she was scheduled to demonstrate for many observers that day. On the other hand, the Philippine teacher just carried on with her usual routines as she was videotaped at random.

In addition, the Japanese class used in this study can be classified as a special class. It is because it is a class in a school affiliated with a university. The school has a special program for English education, and thus it cannot be said that this class represents common Japanese elementary English classes. The Philippine class, meanwhile, can be said to be a typical English

class because it follows the same curriculum as the rest of the public schools in the whole country. These limitations will recommend further study to provide better analysis and findings.

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