STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TEACHER TALK IN JAPANESE-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE CLASSES

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"Teacher talk" as the primary source of linguistic input in a second language classroom has been one of the most hotly debated topics for the last two decades. As a third phase of the author's triangulated studies on teacher talk in Japanese as a second language classes, which so far have comprised (1) an experimental study and (2) a survey study (exploring teachers' perceptions), this study investigated students' perceptions and attitudes about various aspects of teacher talk. In all, 66 students studying intermediate Japanese at American colleges and universities were asked to reflect on their perceptions about their teachers' classroom speech, focusing on (a) rate of speech, (b) lexical and syntactic familiarity, (c) visual information, and (d) use of English. Results showed that the majority of students prefer natural speed, use of appropriate amount of new vocabulary and grammar rules, and minimum but systematic use of English.

INTRODUCTION

Japanese as a second language teachers and educators in the United States, especially at the college and university level, have been debating for some time the issue of teachers' classroom speech. "Teacher talk," the language of instruction that second language teachers use to speak to their nonnative speaker students in the classroom, has been one of the most hotly debated topics among many second language teachers and researchers for over two decades (Gass and Madden, 1985; Krashen, 1985; Chaudron, 1988; Gass, 1997, 2003; Critchley, 2002; Walsh, 2002; Brown, 2007; Bateman, 2008; Wilkerson, 2008; Ewert, 2009). Many Japanese as a second language teachers and researchers as well have acknowledged and agreed on the crucial importance of teacher talk in the field of Japanese language education (Ito, 1985; Matsumoto, 1998, 2006a, 2006b; Kataoka, 2000; Ohta, 2000, 2001, 2008; Ohta and Nakane, 2004; Kawaguchi and Yokomizo, 2005; Katayama, 2007; Kawaguchi, 2007; Kozaki, 2008).

As more Japanese language teachers in the United States engage in in-depth discussions, two specific issues have emerged regarding teacher talk in Japanese as a second language classes. The first issue concerns the use of various linguistic adjustments, such as decreased rates of speech, shorter and syntactically less complex sentences, common vocabulary words/lexicons, more repetition, more rephrasing/summaries of preceding utterances, and more yes/no questions rather than wh-questions (Kataoka, 2001). In Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the use of authentic language materials in natural spoken and written Japanese is considered as essential. How and what types of teacher talk do Japanese teachers need to speak to ensure optimal listening comprehension (or comprehensible input), but at the same time to expose students to natural authentic language input and, ultimately, to best facilitate their target language acquisition?

The second issue is related to the use of students' first language (English) by Japanese language teachers. Should Japanese teachers speak only Japanese in classes while making the best of gestures, facial expressions, pictures, realias/props, and other visual aids? Or should they use some English, for example, in explaining about new grammar rules? If Japanese teachers decide to use some English, then how much of this language should be spoken to best facilitate their students' target language acquisition? Some people, especially strong advocates of the Direct Method, claim that classes in which Japanese is used exclusively lead to better outcomes and proficiency levels. Other teachers, notably Dodson (1983) and Kawaguchi and Yokomizo (2005), emphasize that there is no valid reason for insisting on monolingual presentations in second language classes.

Therefore, it seems vitally important to further investigate various aspects of teacher talk that are concerned with the use of linguistic adjustments and students' first language, and to search for helpful insights. This study intends to explore such helpful insights by examining four major aspects of Japanese teacher talk from students' perspectives: (a) rate of speech, (b) lexical and syntactic familiarity, (c) visual information, and (d) use of English.

STUDIES ON TEACHER TALK AND THEIR RESEARCH METHODS

Scholarly studies on teacher talk began approximately in the early-mid 1980s. They emerged inspired by various findings from (1) "caretaker speech" studies in first language development (Snow, 1972, 1994) and (2) "foreigner talk" research in natural second language acquisition (Ferguson, 1971, 1975). Teacher talk research evolved partly because of the theory of instructed second language acquisition proposed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). They underscored that teacher talk may be regarded, in a sense, as caretaker speech or foreigner talk in the second language classroom. The above three speech phenomena all share similar characteristics: (1) they are all motivated by the speaker's desire to communicate to the listener; (2) similar linguistic adjustments/modifications (such as slower rate, repetitions, and restatements) exist; and (3) the level of complexity of the speech is attuned to

the level of the listener's language proficiency. Krashen and Terrell argued, most importantly, that teacher talk is a vital source of comprehensible input in the second language classroom.

Descriptive studies

Seminal teacher talk research in the 1980s focused on identifying and describing similar linguistics characteristics shared in various second language classroom teacher talk. As Chaudron (1985) and Ferguson and Huebner (1991) indicated, the majority of teacher talk studies administered until the late 1980s were descriptive studies.

For instance, Wesche and Ready (1985) studied discourse of classroom lectures in a Canadian university. They compared psychology class lectures presented (in English and French) to first language speakers with those to second language speakers. They found significant differences, whether the lectures were given in English or French, between (1) classes composed of first language speaker students and (2) those consisting of second language speaker students in the following five aspects of teacher talk: (a) speech rate, (b) the number and duration of pauses, (c) frequency of tensed verbs, (d) percentage of imperative sentences and self-repetition, and (e) amount of nonverbal information use. Class lectures for second language speakers tended to be slower with clearer enunciation and more/longer pauses. They used more tensed verbs and less auxiliary and infinitive verbs. They used significantly more imperatives (such as "Imagine that…" and "Suppose that…") and self-repetition (the use of redundant language forms and semantic content). Then, professors used hand gestures and contextual supports (such as the blackboard and textbook) more frequently in the second language presentations.

Long (1980, 1983) conducted his study on teacher talk while focusing on examining the interactional structures and patterns that may exist between the native speaker teacher and the non-native speaker students. As (1) discourse involving nonnative speaker students and (2) classroom discourse involving only native speaker students were compared, Long found that the former discourse tends to have more instances of (a) comprehension and confirmation checks from the addresser (in teacher talk) and (b) more clarification requests from the addressee than the latter. Long argued that these two features found in many second language class interactions bring about not only greater comprehension on behalf of the students but also further interactions between the teacher and students, leading to augmented target language acquisition and proficiency.

To provide a broad and summative perspective about teacher talk studies, Chaudron (1988) reviewed a large number of descriptive studies, mainly in an ESL (English as a second language) context, and showed a comprehensive list of linguistic features found in teacher talk (as compared to discourse addressed to native-speaker students). In addition to the

aforementioned features, Chaudron included (a) longer pauses, extra volume, extra stress on nouns, and exaggerated intonation (suprasegmental features), (b) use of high-frequency vocabulary words, less slang, and fewer idioms (lexical elements), (c) less use of subordinate clauses and more use of left dislocation of topics (syntactic features), (d) more use of the present-progressive form (morpheme), and (e) more use of tag questions and corrective feedback to students' errors (discourse).

More recent descriptive studies (in the 2000s) adopted an analysis technique named Conversation Analysis (CA) and uncovered other salient characteristics of teacher talk. Many of the earlier descriptive studies on teacher talk (in the 1980s and 1990s) primarily focused on the teachers' speech alone. Conversation Analysis studies, on the contrary, took a look at the entire conversation discourse (encompassing all of the teacher talk, student talk, and turn-taking mechanisms) and explored teacher talk as part of the second language classroom interaction. Conversation Analysis studies consequently enabled researchers to capture many important pragmatic and discourse features of teacher talk, such as corrective feedback/recast, scaffolding, latching, and teacher echo (Walsh, 2002; Brown, 2007; Ewert, 2009).

Correlational studies

As more studies were administered in the 1980s and 1990s, teacher talk research as one sub-area of instructed second language acquisition research grew not only in number but also in quality. Many of the early teacher talk studies were devoted to describing in a detailed manner various specific linguistic characteristics inherent in second language classroom teacher talk. By the end of the 1980s, however, several studies began to use quantitative research methods based on statistical analyses, attesting to a significant leap in methodological growth and transformation in the entire teacher talk research. One of the quantitative research methods utilized to study teacher talk further was the correlational (or associational) research method.

As Mackey and Gass (2005) elucidated, correlational studies aim at testing a correlational relation between or among variables so that the researchers can make adequate predictions. If variables turn out to be strongly correlated, then a prediction can be made about the likelihood of the presence of one from the presence of the other(s). Although correlational studies cannot establish any causation or causal relationship, the emergence of correlational studies in the late 1980s was a clear sign indicating that teacher talk research was further evolving and transforming.

Tollefson (1988), for instance, explored the degree of association between teachers' question types in teacher talk and students' response patterns in ESL/EFL (English as a foreign language) classes. Teachers' question types were divided into (1) display questions, which aim at testing students' target-language knowledge (e.g., "Are you a student?" "What day is today?"), and (2) referential questions, which intend to gain real information from students (e.g., "What would you like for lunch?" "Has anyone seen the eraser?"). Results of

data analyses showed that teachers' referential questions have a strong correlation with students' creative responses, which often lead to further teacher-student interactions. On the other hand, teachers' display questions were apt to have a strong association with students' imitative responses, which usually do not lead to or facilitate further teacher-student interactions. Tollefson claimed that it is critically important for second language teachers to incorporate referential questions into their teacher talk, especially as they attempt to create more communicative language teaching.

Derwing (1989) as well used the correlational research method to study various adjustments in teacher talk. Rather than effective or positive adjustments, she explored whether there might be any inadequate linguistic adjustments in teacher talk that can cause negative consequences among nonnative speaker students. To find such negative adjustments in ESL teacher talk, native speakers were asked to view a film and subsequently describe its main contents to their partners who had not seen it before. Before this task began, the native speakers had been shown in advance the comprehension questions that would be asked of their nonnative partners. A similar task was given between native speakers and their native speaker partners, as well. Results showed that many native speakers used significantly more irrelevant details when speaking to their nonnative speaker partners than to native speaker partners. Furthermore, Derwing found that the amount of such irrelevant details in teacher talk was negatively correlated with the nonnative speakers' listening comprehension.

Experimental studies

It is certainly true that correlational studies can help predict the likelihood of the presence of one variable by another. However, a strong correlation/association does not necessarily signify that a causal relationship can be established between the two variables. One example often cited to show this is the correlation between the amount of cola consumption and crime rate. When it gets hot, more people may be likely to purchase cola. As the temperature goes up, crime rate may also increase. Consequently, these two factors tend to be associated to each other to some extent. It does not denote at all, however, that the consumption of cola causes crimes.

In contrast, experimental studies are capable of examining/establishing causal relationships between/among variables. Nonetheless, in the early 1980s, they were relatively rare in teacher talk research. Gradually, more experimental teacher talk studies emerged in second language acquisition journals and publications in the late 1980s. Through the 1990s, they became more widespread and flourished. Finally, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, they became a well-established mainstream research method for teacher talk studies.

Griffiths (1990), for instance, examined the effects of different speech rates in teacher talk on students' listening comprehension. The

students/subjects were 15 Omani elementary-school teachers (from the Middle East), whose native language was not English. They were participating in a university inservice training course. Their English (as a second language) proficiency was estimated as varying between upper-elementary and intermediate. They were presented randomly with three different passages (of about 350-420 words) at three speech rates: (1) 200 wmp (words per minute) or 3.8 sps (syllables per second), which is moderately fast; (2) 150 wpm (2.85 sps), which is average; and (3) 100 wpm (1.93 sps), which is slow. The subjects' comprehension was measured by results of their answers to 15 true-false questions for each passage. The test scores were analyzed statistically to determine any significant differences among the three speech rates. Results showed that the moderately fast rate (200 wpm) brought about a significant reduction in the subject's comprehension scores in comparison with the average speech rate (150 wpm) and slow speech rate (100 wpm). However, the average speech rate was not significantly different from the slow speech rate in the subjects' comprehension scores. Griffiths confirmed that speech rate of teacher talk is one of the contributing factors to non-native speaker students' listening comprehension. The study also supported the notion of "critical (speech) rates," above which listeners' comprehension starts to decline dramatically.

Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005) conducted their experimental study to examine the effects of gestures and facial cues on listening comprehension of a videotaped lecture among ESL students. This lecture (about ceramics for beginners) was given by a native speaker of English and lasted approximately 20 minutes. The subjects were, in all, 21 ESL students at the low-intermediate level and 21 students at the advanced level. They were randomly assigned to three stimulus conditions: (1) AV-gesture-face (an audiovisual lecture showing the lecturer's upper body to show the gestures and face), (2) AV-face (the same lecture videotaped focused on the lecturer's face, that is, shoulders and above, without any gestures below the shoulders shown), and (3) Audio only (that is, with no visual information shown).

Results of a multiple-choice comprehension task revealed that the subjects who saw the audiovisual lecture (that is, [1] and [2]) attained significantly better listening comprehension scores than those who listened to the audio only (that is, [3]). Among the advanced level of students, the AV-face condition produced the best listening comprehension scores. For the low-intermediate students, on the other hand, the AV-gesture-face condition demonstrated the best results.

Many other experimental studies about teacher talk were conducted in the late 1990s and early 2000s, notably Derwing (1996) and Matsumoto (1998). Based on her own aforementioned correlational study, Derwing (1996) examined the effects of three types of elaboration in teacher talk ([1] marked paraphrasing, [2] unmarked paraphrasing, and [3] unnecessary details) on nonnative speakers' listening comprehension. Results supported that unnecessary details in teacher talk does certainly hinder the listening comprehension of nonnative speaker students. They helped establish the

causal relationship, though in a negative manner, between such negative adjustment in teacher talk and listening comprehension among ESL students. In addition, results showed that marked paraphrasing facilitated listening comprehension in some cases, as well.

Matsumoto (1998) investigated teacher talk in JSL classroom settings. The study investigated the effects of (1) global linguistic adjustments, (2) a series of three contextual pictures, and (3) usage of students' first language (English) for explaining new grammar rules on (a) immediate listening comprehension and (b) delayed memory in two-three weeks among American university students studying Japanese. Results exhibited positive effects of global linguistic adjustments and L1 use for grammatical explanations on immediate listening comprehension and of a series of contextual pictures on delayed memory.

Qualitative studies (studying affective factors)

In the early 2000s, finally, teacher talk researchers began exploring some affective factors (such as perceptions, feelings, and attitudes) students may experience when exposed to different types of teacher talk. In the field of instructed second language acquisition research, these affective factors are considered part of "individual learner factors," "causes for individual differences," or "learner variables" (Ellis, 2000; Littlewood 2006; Brown, 2007). In addition to perceptions, feelings, and attitudes, individual learner factors also comprise (1) motivation and confidence, (2) personality characteristics (such as tolerance of ambiguity, sensitivity to rejection, introvert/extrovert, self-esteem, and empathy), (3) learning style (e.g., visual/auditory, kinesthetic, and field dependent/independent), (4) aptitude, (5) age, and (6) past language experience. Like other individual learner factors, students' affective feelings, perceptions, and attitudes do affect students' daily language learning processes in a significant way. They have been investigated not only quantitatively (that is, by using correlational and experimental research methods), but also qualitatively (for example, through observational/ethnographic, interview, and survey studies).

Compared to experimental studies, it does not appear that there are yet as many qualitative studies that have explored students' perceptions, feelings, and attitudes toward various types of teacher talk. Nonetheless, one study conducted by Mackey et al. (2000) may be a good example that fits into this category of teacher talk research.

In this study, 10 ESL and 7 IFL (= Italian as a foreign language) students (both attending American universities) engaged in a communicative task, where a native or near-native interviewer gave various types of corrective feedback (as part of teacher talk) regarding the errors the student had made during the session. The entire communicative task was videotaped with the consent of the student. After the task was completed, the investigators showed each student the videotaped session. Then, the student was asked to recall the

session and elaborate on his/her own original perceptions about various types of error correction feedback provided by the interviewer. Results showed that the students were relatively accurate in their perceptions about phonological, lexical, and semantic levels of error correction feedback. However, morphosyntactic level feedback was not noticed as such in general.

Some other similar studies followed in the 2000s. For example, Carpenter et al. (2006) investigated how advanced-level ESL students would perceive recasts that are provided as part of their teacher's corrective feedback. Like the Mackey et al. (2000) study, Carpenter et al. also used videotaping and stimulus recall for their data collection, and found that morphosyntactic recasts were less accurately recognized by the students than phonological or lexical recasts. In addition, Carpenter et al. found that the contrast between a problematic utterance (made by a student) and a recast (in the teacher's feedback) contributed to the student's interpretation of the recast in teacher talk as corrective feedback. Without such contrast, a recast may be perceived merely as a literal or semantic repetition of the student's utterance by the teacher without noticing any corrective element.

Finally, Kawaguchi (2007) and Kozaki (2008) administered qualitative studies to investigate students' attitudes and perceptions toward JSL teachers' use of various (1) speech rates and (2) non-verbal (visual) information. For data collection, Kawaguchi relied on a survey questionnaire and students' written responses to it. Kozaki, on the contrary, mainly used oral interviews. Both researchers, nonetheless, intended to obtain detailed pictures of various teacher talk phenomena from students' perspectives. Results of both studies revealed that many students do not feel as much overwhelmed or negative (as initially thought) about relatively fast speech rates. When fast speech rates occur and begin to affect their learning adversely, it appeared that many students capitalize on their learning strategies, such as asking questions to their teacher or paying more attention to the nonverbal aspects of teacher talk (including gestures, facial expressions, pictures, and realias).

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The majority of the aforementioned experimental studies revealed relatively positive effects on students' comprehension or delayed memory of (1) various linguistic adjustments (such as decreased rates of speech, marked paraphrasing, and global linguistic adjustments, but not unnecessary details), (2) visual information (including contextual pictures, gestures, and facial cues), and (3) students' first language (L1) use (especially, for the purpose of explaining new grammar rules) in teacher talk.

Despite such positive results as a whole, various anecdotal accounts (Matsumoto, 1996; Kawaguchi, 2007; Kozaki, 2008) show that there still exist reservations among many Japanese teachers about directly applying experimental studies results to their classroom teaching. Different from natural sciences such as physics and chemistry, classroom learning and teaching processes are complex human phenomena, which are oftentimes

stimulus free and may not always be explained by simply causal relationships or probabilities. So many variables are also involved intricately. In addition, classroom learning and teaching processes tend to be affected a great deal by the teacher's beliefs, which are value laden (Richards, 2002). It is true that the quality of experimental studies in second language acquisition has significantly improved. Because of these reasons, however, it still appears that many Japanese teachers want to avoid directly applying results of experimental studies to their classroom teaching, including the issues of teacher talk.

This study, therefore, aimed at investigating students' perceptions and attitudes about certain aspects of teacher talk and providing further insights useful to many Japanese teachers. This was the third phase of the author's triangulated studies about Japanese teacher talk, which so far have comprised (1) an experimental study about the relationship between various types of teacher talk and comprehension (Matsumoto, 1998) and (2) a survey study exploring *teachers*' perceptions about teacher talk (Matsumoto, 2006b). More specifically, the present study used a survey research method and investigated how American college and university students in intermediate Japanese classes may feel about their teachers' classroom speech, especially (a) rate of speech, (b) lexical and syntactic familiarity, (c) use of visual and extralinguistic information, and (d) use of English in the classroom.

RESEARCH METHOD

Participants and Data Collection

From a subject pool of 74 American college and university students studying Japanese as a second language, 68 students agreed to participate in this study. All subjects were studying intermediate (second-year or second-semester) Japanese at five different universities and colleges located on the Pacific coast. First, class instructors explained to students about this study during one class period. After their consent was received, the same instructors gave a survey questionnaire to each student during another class period. The entire survey questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete. In all, 66 students returned their answers: 9 students from "G" University, 5 students from "O" College, 12 students from "P" University, 11 students from "S" Community College, and 29 students from "W" University. Two students were not present in class when the survey was administered.

The survey questionnaire included four questions pertinent to teacher talk. Regarding rate of speech, the survey asked, "Would you like your Japanese teacher to speak in a fast and natural speed (in such a way that s/he would speak to a native Japanese)? Or do you think it is better if your teacher uses a relatively decreased rate of speech? Please explain the reason why, too." Regarding lexical and syntactic familiarity/complexity, the question asked, "Would you like your Japanese teacher to speak the vocabulary words and

grammar items you are already familiar with alone while not using any new words or new grammar rules at all? Or is it better if your teacher sometimes uses words and grammar rules you have not learned yet? Please explain why, too."

With regard to the use of visual and extralinguistic information, the question was "Would you like your Japanese teacher to use visual aids, such as the blackboard, pictures, gestures, facial cues, and props as s/he speaks in your class? Please explain why also." As for the use of English, the survey asked, "Would you like your Japanese teacher to speak in Japanese alone? Or would you like your teacher to sometimes use English, for example, when you do not understand what s/he is talking about? Please explain why, too."

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted without any particular hypotheses or preselection of any certain characteristics. All the students' hand-written answers/narratives were word-processed by the investigator. While utilizing analytic induction techniques, which are often used in many classroom ethnographic/qualitative studies (Richards, 2003; Mackey and Gass, 2005), the investigator searched for and jotted down salient recurring phenomena in the students' answers. Then, he gradually came up with several categories of salient characteristics regarding students' perceptions on each of the above four aspects of teacher talk.

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Results of the data analyses were as follows.

Table 1: Students' Perceptions about Rate of Speech in Teacher Talk

Categories of students' perceptions	*Number of students* (%)
(a) Fast and natural speed:	20 (30 %)
(c-1) Slightly decreased, but still natural speed:	14 (21 %)
(b) Somewhat slowed-down speed:	12 (18 %)
(c-2) At first, decreased but later gradually increased rate of speed:	10 (15 %)
(c-3) Decreased speed for new materials and natural speed for already learned materials:	6 (9 %)
(c-4) Both/mix of the above two, (c-2) and (c-3):	4 (6 %)
Total	66 (100 %)

As Table 1 shows, various categories of students' perceptions about rate of speech in teacher talk were identified: (a) 30% of the students expressed that they would like their Japanese teacher to speak in "fast and natural speed," (b) 18% "somewhat slowed-down speed," and (c) 51% "somewhat slowed-down but still natural speed." The category (c) combined/included the following four categories: (c-1) "slightly decreased, but still natural speed" (21%); (c-2) "at first decreased but later gradually increased speed" (15%); (c-3) "decreased speed for new materials and natural speed for already learned materials," (9%); and (c-4) "a mix of (c-2) and (c-3)" (6%).

Actual students' narratives also showed their strong desire for getting accustomed to native speakers' natural speed while making sure that they do not get totally lost. The narratives underscored some kind of "fear" students feel about becoming unable to comprehend what the teacher says and getting totally lost in the class. For example, one student from "P" University (P-3) wrote: "I believe that it is important for the teacher to speak at a normal speed because that is what I will hear when I go to Japan. However if I truly don't understand what s/he is saying, some flexibility should be left for slowing down." One student from "S" Community College (S-1) also wrote: "I think that it is necessary to speak at a rate of speed that is considered to be "normal" in the Japanese culture. However, sometimes it is appropriate to repeat and slow the rate of speed in order to explain whatever you are speaking about if there is any question in the student's mind."

Table 2: Students' Perceptions about Lexical and Syntactic Familiarity in Teacher Talk

Categories of students' perceptions	*Number of students* (%)
(a) New lexical/syntactic items should be used *sometimes, but not always*	28 (42 %)
(b) New lexical/syntactic items should be used, *but not to the extent students do not understand the meanings*	8 (12 %)
(c) New lexical/syntactic items should be used *with appropriate amount of the teacher explanations about them*	7 (11 %)
(d) New lexical/syntactic items should be used *gradually and not at once*	6 (9 %)
(e) New lexical/syntactic items should be used *through lexical/syntactic items commonly used in Japan*	6 (9 %)

New lexical items should be used, but not new syntactic items	1 (2 %)
(f) Had better stay only within what they already know	8 (12 %)
No Answer	2 (3 %)
Total	66 (100 %)

Table 2 shows several categories of students' perceptions about lexical and syntactic familiarity in teacher talk. In all, 83% of the students expressed their willingness to be exposed to new lexical and syntactic items through teacher talk, more specifically, with the following five conditions: if and when they are used (a) "sometimes, but not always" (42%), (b) "not to the extent students do not understand the meanings" (12%), (c) "with appropriate amount of the teacher explanations about them" (11%), (d) "gradually and not at once" (9%), or (e) "through lexical/syntactic items commonly used in Japan" (9%). In contrast, 12% of the students expressed that teacher talk (f) "had better stay only within what they already know" regarding the lexical and syntactic items.

Actual narratives also showed many students' positive attitudes about being exposed to new lexical/syntactic items through teacher talk. As mentioned with regard to rate of speech, however, they also suggested some type of fear and anxiety students have about getting totally confused and possibly misunderstanding/misinterpreting what the teacher is saying. For instance, one student from "P" university (P-2) wrote: "New words on a limited basis with their meanings made clear by handout or spoken English to eliminate confusion and possible misinterpretation." One student from "W" University (W-22) replied: "I really prefer them to use words I have just recently learned. Hearing too many words I don't know makes me tune out and get really frustrated."

Table 3: Students' Perceptions about the Use of Visual and Extralinguistic Information in Teacher Talk

Categories of students' perceptions	*Number of students (%)*
(a) YES: *Because they can augment comprehension by making the contexts real and tangible*	19 (27 %)
(b) YES: *Because they can strengthen memory/retention*	15 (21 %)

(c) YES: *Because they can make class interesting*	14 (20 %)
(d) YES: *Because they can create a direct association link*	9 (13 %)
(e) YES: *Because they can speed up the learning process*	6 (8 %)
NO: They are not really effective/helpful	8 (11 %)
Total	*71 (100 %)

* Some students' answers included more than one category of reasons, and thus the total number was larger than total N.

      Table 3 shows results about students' perceptions of the use of visual and extralinguistic information in teacher talk. In all, 89% of the students were in favor of it because of the following reasons: (a) they think visual and extralinguistic information can "augment comprehension by making the contexts real and tangible" (27%); (b) they think they can "strengthen memory/retention" (21%); (c) they think they can "make class interesting" (20%); (d) it seems they can "create a direct association link" (13%); and (e) they think they can "speed up the learning process" (8%). Only 11% of the subjects did not think that the use of visual information is really effective/helpful.

Table 4: Students' Perceptions about the Use of English in Teacher Talk

Categories of students' perceptions	*Number of students* (%)
(a) Teachers should try to speak ONLY JAPANESE ALWAYS	12 (18 %)
(b) Teachers should try to speak ONLY JAPANESE at least ONCE A WEEK	1 (2 %)
(c) Teachers should use ENGLISH ONLY WHEN *it is hard for students to understand*	29 (44 %)
(d) Teachers should use ENGLISH ONLY WHEN *grammar and difficult concepts are taught*	13 (20 %)
(e) Teachers should use ENGLISH ONLY WHEN *the use of Japanese, visual information, and all other means fail to help students comprehend*	3 (5 %)

(f) Teachers should use ENGLISH ONLY WHEN *two languages are compared*	1 (2 %)
(g) Teachers should use ENGLISH ONLY WHEN the meanings of difficult words are explained	1 (2 %)
(h) Teachers should use ENGLISH ONLY OUTSIDE of the class	1 (2%)
Teachers should not speak Japanese alone, but *use English as well*	1 (2 %)
No Answer	1 (2 %)
Total	66 (100 %)

Various students expressed their unique insights and experiences about the effects of visual information in their narratives. It seemed that they know the efficacy of visual information by intuition. One student from "G" University (G-6) wrote: "Yes, to make the class interesting. Visual aids aid in understanding especially when learning certain Japanese situations, such as meeting for the first time (bowing), meeting and dining (utensils they use), or what they wear when they attend a special occasion." One student from "O" College (O-4) replied: "Yes, they create a lasting image in my mind for better retention." One student from "S" Community College (S-7) pointed to a similar element: "Yes, visual aids, gestures, and props make a more lasting impression."

Table 4 shows results about the use of English in teacher talk. A total of 96% of the students expressed that they would like their Japanese teacher to use Japanese as much as possible while, for example, trying to speak (a) "ONLY JAPANESE ALWAYS" (18%), (b) "at least ONCE A WEEK" (2%), using ENGLISH (c) "ONLY WHEN it is hard for students to understand" (44%), (d) "ONLY WHEN grammar and difficult concepts are taught" (20%), (e) "ONLY WHEN the use of Japanese, visual information, and all other means fail to help students comprehend" (5%), (f) "ONLY WHEN two languages are compared" (2%), (g) "ONLY WHEN the meanings of difficult words are explained" (2%), or (h) "ONLY OUTSIDE of the classroom" (2%). Only 2 % of the students indicated that their Japanese teachers should not use Japanese alone, but use English as well without mentioning the conditions for using English.

Many students' narratives highlighted the importance of subtly balancing between (i) the maximum use of authentic Japanese speech and (ii) careful/minimum use of English explanations in the classroom. One student from "S" Community College (S-7) wrote: "Sometimes in English, but with reservation. If we are totally lost and pictures and gestures are not helping, then it's OK.. This way, at least we'll learn what she's saying. But if there is too much English, then the tendency is not to try to figure out what she is

saying, but to wait for the English." One student from "W" University (W-19) shared: "I think, at this level, some English will be necessary for simple explanations. To refuse to speak any English makes the process unnecessarily unwieldy."

DISCUSSION

The main goal of this section is to incorporate the preceding results into a broader context of teacher talk research and classroom teaching. More specifically, results of the present study were compared to, and integrated with, prior research findings, especially those deriving from the first and second phases of the author's triangulated studies. Then, more practical implications of the present study findings to Japanese as a second language teaching were explored.

Rate of Speech in Teacher Talk

First, as for rate of speech, in the present study approximately 80% of the students (above [a] and [c] categories for speech rate) expressed that their ultimate goal is to get used to and become able to understand native speakers' natural speed. However, it is also true that 69% of the subjects (above [b] plus [c] categories) also indicated that being exposed to such fast and natural speech and still being able to accurately comprehend can sometimes be difficult. It seems, therefore, that many American college and university students studying intermediate Japanese are relatively open to somewhat slowed-down (not too fast) teacher talk as long as it "sounds natural."

This finding was consistent with results from the author's previous experimental and survey studies (Matsumoto, 1998, 2006b). Both prior studies suggested that teacher talk in Japanese as a second language classroom interactions may not need to be exactly in the same speech rate as exhibited in NS (native speaker)-NS (native speaker) interactions. The "naturalness" in teacher talk appears to be more important than simply being "fast" from students' perspectives.

However, the "naturalness" of teacher talk in many second language classes is still a vague notion. Further studies need to define it operationally, for example, by finding out a concrete range of speech rate of teacher talk that many students would feel "natural." Such teacher talk speed may be identified in terms of wpm (word per minute) or sps (syllables per second). Such Japanese teacher talk may not be at the same rate of speech precisely as exhibited in NS-NS interaction. However, it will still be acceptable as the language of instruction in many Japanese as a second language classrooms.

Lexical and Syntactic Familiarity in Teacher Talk

Second, regarding the lexical and syntactic familiarity, the majority of students (83 %) expressed that they were in favor of lexically and syntactically

"relatively challenging" teacher talk that comprises some new words and grammar rules not studied before, as long as it does not make them confused by containing too many unfamiliar items. Such enthusiasm and relatively positive attitudes among students were not noticed in the previous two studies.

In spite of such positive attitudes among students, it still seems integral that Japanese teachers need to be able to identify in each class period which vocabulary words and grammar rules their students have already learned. Teachers' updated awareness about the students' familiar (and unfamiliar) words and grammar rules should be an important basis for providing well-attuned or controlled teacher talk so that students may not be confused by too many unfamiliar vocabulary words and grammar rules. If the teacher can identify any words or grammar rules s/he is using as new to the students, then s/he can flexibly provide appropriate explanations and make sure that students would not be overwhelmed by their fear and anxiety.

The Use of Visual and Extralinguistic Information

As the data analysis showed, most students (89 %) acknowledged that visual and extralinguistic information their teachers utilize is very helpful. The reasons they indicated for being in favor of the use of visual information were generally consistent with results of the experimental study (Matsumoto, 1998), including its effects of strengthening delayed memory, making class interesting (and thus augmenting student motivation), and creating a direct association link. However, the two studies did not coincide with each other in regard to its effects on comprehension. In the present study, students pointed out that visual information is helpful because it augments comprehension by making the contexts real and tangible. The experimental study, on the contrary, revealed that the effects of three contextual pictures on immediate comprehension are not significant.

Despite such minor discrepancy, it still turned out evident that students are capable of closely monitoring their own language acquisition process as independent and autonomous learners. Their keen and relatively precise awareness of what is going on in their language acquisition process is certainly worth noticing.

The Use of English in Teacher Talk

Finally, as for the use of English, almost all the students (96%) wanted their teachers to use Japanese as much as possible in the classroom. However, as the present study results indicated, almost 70% of all the students allowed some classroom use of English, including using ENGLISH (c) "ONLY WHEN it is hard for students to understand" (44%), (d) "ONLY WHEN grammar and difficult concepts are taught" (20%), (e) "ONLY WHEN the use of Japanese, visual information, and all other means fail to help students comprehend" (5%), (f) "ONLY WHEN two languages are compared" (2%), and (g) "ONLY WHEN the meanings of difficult words are explained" (2%). It turned out that the notion of a "minimum, systematic, and carefully-controlled" use of English is the consensus agreed upon among the majority of

students at the intermediate level of Japanese classes, especially for the purpose of ensuring accurate comprehension. This was, again, consistent with results of the previous two studies (Matsumoto, 1998, 2006b).

Similar to the findings pertinent to rate of speech, this study underscored that many students have some degree of fear and anxiety about totally getting lost, confused, or misunderstanding/misinterpreting what their teacher is saying. Therefore, minimum but still well-controlled and effective use of English seems vital so that teachers can make sure students comprehend well and lower their anxiety level.

Balancing between the maximum use of authentic Japanese speech and careful/minimum use of English explanations in the classroom may be made possible by applying the linguistic concept of "diglossia." In the area of language policy studies, researchers have identified that in some countries the use of two languages tends to be differentiated clearly by their functions and purposes (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). In the JSL classroom setting, hence, teachers may differentiate the use of Japanese and English depending on the functions of their speech. While speaking Japanese as the main medium of classroom instruction, they can switch into English, for example, when they (1) teach difficult grammar rules and concepts, (2) use difficult vocabulary words and expressions, (3) compare the two languages, and (4) assist students in comprehending correctly when the use of Japanese, visual information, and all other means fail.

CONCLUSION

This study examined teacher talk in Japanese as a second language classes from students' perspectives while shedding light on the four important aspects of teacher talk: rate of speech, lexical and syntactic familiarity, use of visual and extralinguistic information, and use of English in teacher talk. The present study explored students' perceptions on the above four components of teacher talk, mainly because some reservations still exist among teachers about directly applying the findings of experimental studies to their classroom teaching.

Results of the present study revealed that the majority of students are in favor of teacher talk that is characterized by (1) natural speed, (2) use of appropriate amount of new lexical and syntactic items, (3) use of visual and extralinguistic information, and (4) minimum, carefully-controlled, but effective use of English. From the perspective of research triangulation, results turned out to be consistent with those of the previous experimental study and survey study about teachers' perceptions, expect (2). It also turned out that many students have fear and anxiety about being lost and totally misunderstanding what the teacher is saying. Japanese teachers may take these results into consideration as they further continue in-depth discussions/debates on teacher talk.

As for natural speed, studies are necessary to find a more objective and operational definition of such "natural" speed of teacher talk. In addition, the survey questionnaire items of this study can incorporate the specific classroom contexts in which the above four aspects of teacher talk are examined. When the questionnaire items are constructed, the author may explore students' perceptions and attitudes according to the type of teaching procedures, such as grammar lectures, mechanical grammar practice, communicative activities (including role-plays and tasks), and free conversations.

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