

TEAM TEACHING IN JAPAN FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE ALTs, THE JTEs, AND THE STUDENTS

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Abstract: This case study explores team teaching in Japan from the perspectives of JTEs (Japanese English Teachers), ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers), and students. Special focus is attributed to teachers and students' perceptions of ALT and JTE roles. To determine the perspectives of all three participants, 112 students, 4 JTEs and 2 ALTs from a Japanese high school in Chiba Prefecture were surveyed. Fieldwork was conducted over a ten-day period at the research site in 2009 to collect data in the form of questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. The findings indicate more of a mismatch between students' perceptions of their teachers' roles than between teachers. The results also reveal the students prefer a combination of both teachers and find team-taught classes more beneficial to developing their English skills.

Key words: ALT, JTE, team teaching

Native and non-native speaking teachers of English have unique insights to offer language learners. In theory, effective team teaching utilizes these combined insights (Medgyes, 1992; 1994). Team teaching in Japan is defined as a native English speaker (Assistant Language Teacher--ALT) working with a Japanese English teacher (JTE) to help students learn English (Brumby and Wada, 1990 as cited in Tajino & Walker, 1998a). The Japanese Ministry of Education (Monkasho) introduced team teaching in 1977 with the Monbusho English Fellows (MEF) program to develop students' communicative competence, encourage internationalization, and foster cultural exchange (Monkasho, 1994). However, change in Japanese society occurs incrementally; meaning changes may not be immediately apparent (Gluck, 1998).

Thus, although ALTs and JTEs have been working together for over 30 years, obstacles to effective team teaching remain. One obstacle is that the government's communicative goal for team teaching conflicts with the goal of English education at college track schools – to prepare students for grammar-heavy entrance exams, which causes JTEs to hesitate to teamteach (McConnell, 2000). Other obstacles are insufficient team teaching training, ALTs with limited grammatical knowledge, (Macedo, 2002; Tanabe, 1990, as cited in Tajino & Walker, 1998b), and uncertainty over how to utilize the ALT (Browne & Evans, 1994; Macedo, 2002; Tajino & Walker, 1998b) resulting in ALTs being used as tape recorders (Kobayashi, 2001, as cited in Macedo, 2002; Tanabe, 1990, as cited in Tajino & Walker, 1998b).

Ineffective utilization of ALTs stems from one of the most prevalently cited obstacles: confusion/conflicts over which roles each teacher should assume (Mahoney, 2004; Tajino & Tajino, 2000; Tajino & Walker, 1998a; Voci-Reed, 1994). Mahoney (2004) identified role perception conflicts between ALTs and JTEs over the division of roles, the responsibilities of disciplining and motivating the students, and the main role of each teacher. A theme emerging from studies concerning teachers' role perceptions is that ALTs and JTEs were often placed in distinct roles with the ALT as the cultural informant and the JTE as the translator/interpreter and grammar instructor (Mahoney, 2004; Scholefield, 1996; Tajino & Walker, 1998b). In fact, JTEs in Tajino and Walker's (1998b) study did not appear to find the roles of cultural informant or grammar instructor interchangeable, but instead specific to each teacher, and Scholefield's (1996) JTEs did not mention grammar as an ALT role. In addition, Tajino and Walker (1998b) found nearly 40% of high school JTEs surveyed indicated the JTE was not needed if the ALT was proficient in Japanese, while the majority claimed the ALT was needed even if the Japanese teacher spoke English fluently. These findings suggest JTEs may feel their role in the classroom is being phased out.

Research concerning students' perspectives revealed similar results. Students in Tajino and Walker's (1998) study expected JTEs to be aware of their learning difficulties, teach grammar, and help students learn English study skills (Tajino & Walker, 1998a). However, ALTs were to instruct students in communication, pronunciation, and culture. The students ranked teaching pronunciation and culture lowest as a JTE role and grammar last as an ALT role, indicating JTE and ALT roles were not interchangeable. Similarly students in Burke's (2009) study, conducted previously at the research site, reported the ALT's role as pronunciation guide. In fact, the

students were divided over whether they liked the JTE to speak English in class, suggesting a lack confidence in the JTE's English speaking ability. In addition, like the teachers in Tajino and Walker's (1998b) study, Tajino and Walker's (1998a) students suggested the ALT was more necessary than the JTE. Nonetheless, students in both Burke (2009) and Tajino and Walker's (1998a) studies indicated they enjoyed team-taught classes and felt such classes could improve their English. Therefore, despite the challenges facing team teaching, students still find value in team-taught classes.

Although previous studies on this issue have provided useful insights (Burke, 2009; Mahoney, 2004; Scholefield, 1996; Tajino & Walker, 1998a; Tajino & Walker 1998b), few have examined the perceptions of all three members of the teaching team (see Tajino & Walker 1998a), and published studies on the students' perceptions are sparse (see Miyazato, 2001; Tajino & Walker 1998a), yet the students are the most affected by the unsuccessful team teaching. Thus, research considering the perspectives of all three participants is necessary (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2004). Furthermore, the data from these studies (Burke, 2009; Mahoney, 2004; Scholefield, 1996; Tajino & Walker, 1998a; Tajino & Walker 1998b) have been collected primarily through questionnaires, providing only a surface look at team teaching. Therefore, a combination of questionnaires, interviews, and class observations were utilized in this study to obtain an in-depth view of how each member of the team perceives JTE and ALT roles. The research questions addressed are: whether there are any mismatches concerning JTE and ALT role perceptions between the three participants; and how the students perceive team teaching.

METHOD

Participants

This study was conducted at a Japanese high school in Chiba Prefecture with 973 students (460 boys and 513 girls). The participants consisted of two native English-speaking ALTs (one female and one male) from the Chiba Wisconsin Program, which has the same contract as the JET Program, four JTEs (one female and three males), and 112 high school students (28 males and 82 females—two student did not indicate their gender), ages ranging from 15-18. Both ALTs have team-taught for more than two years at the current school. English teaching experience among the JTEs ranged from 23-39 years and team teaching experience ranged from 2-13 years. The JTEs and ALTs were recruited through a contact at the school.

A sign-up sheet explaining the research was distributed, asking for teacher volunteers. Homeroom teachers recruited students. First year students from 1A comprised 39 of the total student participants. These students were taking General English, a team-taught test preparation class. Second-year students from 2A represented 38 of the student participants and were enrolled in English II, a test preparation class and Daily English, a team-taught conversation course. The final 35 participants were third year students from 3A. The 3A participants were taking Current English; a team-taught class focusing on debate. All students surveyed and interviewed belonged to the English Course. At the research site, there were three student tracks (the Regular Course, the Science Course, and the English Course). Student test scores or teacher recommendation determined course placement. These courses differ in that English Course students take more English classes (10) as opposed to Regular Course (six) and Science Course students (five) and experience more team-taught lessons. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms have been provided for the teachers, and the students are referenced according to homerooms. Tables 1 and 2 provide a summary of participants.

Table 1. Teacher Participants

Teacher participants	Gender	Teaching experience	Team teaching experience
Mr. Yahashi	Male	29 years	2 years
Ms. Otake	Female	29 years	10 years
Mr. Sasabe	Male	37 years	13 years
Mr. Komatsu	Male	23 years	13 years
Ms. Johnson	Female	1.5 years	2.5 years
Mr. Anderson	Male	0 years	1.5 years

Table 2. Student Participants

Homeroom	Number of participants	Age	Gender	English class
1 A	39	15-16	30 F, 9 M	General English
2A	38	16-17	22 F, 12 M	Daily English, English II
3A	35	17-18	30 F, 5 M	Current English

Questionnaires

Each participant received a questionnaire specific to his/her position (JTE, ALT, or student). Student questionnaires were anonymous. However, ALT and JTE questionnaires were marked with individual codes to match the ALT and JTE teams, yet provide a sense of anonymity. ALT and JTE questionnaires, administered in English, were similar but not identical. Items on both questionnaires were based on previous studies (see Table 3 and Table 4). The JTE questionnaire addressed the following categories: demographic information, team teaching roles, lesson planning, skill areas in team-taught lessons, the JTE and the ALT relationship, and government guidelines/training for JTEs and ALTs. The ALT questionnaire contained the same categories with a category about the ALT and student relationship.

Both questionnaires consisted of Likert scale statements, ranked items, and multiple choice and open-ended questions. The students' questionnaire was translated into Japanese and required students to use a Likert scale to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about team teaching.

Table 3. ALT Questionnaire

Items	Previous Studies
2.12-2.14	Tajino and Walker (1998a)
1.1-1.2, 1.5, 2.1-2.9, 2.11	Tajino and Walker (1998b)
1.3-1.4, 7.3-7.4, 8.2-8.7	Macedo (2002)
2.13-2.14	Mahoney (2004)
2.2-2.3, 7.7, 6.8	Bailey, Dale, and Squire (1992)

Table 4. Student Questionnaire

Items	Previous Studies
i-6, 8-13, 15-26	Tajino and Walker (1998a)

Class Observations

To gain insight into teachers' comments from the questionnaires and interviews and determine how teachers performed different roles in the classroom, I observed and video recorded four types of team-taught classes. A class observation checklist containing an event-sampling chart and cate-

gories outlining specific elements in the lesson to examine guided these semi-structured class observations. The event-sampling chart contained the eleven JTE and ALT roles explored by Tajino and Walker (1998a; 1998b). This chart was used to record any time the ALT or the JTE assumed a role and determine which roles the ALT and JTE most frequently filled. To conduct these observations, I attended General English and English II (entrance exam preparation courses). I also observed Current English and Daily English class. These are non-test preparation classes, so the curriculum is less constrained, and ALTs do more of the planning. Observing a variety of classes provided a broader view of the team teaching situations.

Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the two ALTs and the four JTEs. Interviews were audio-recorded and ranged from 30-60 minutes. The purpose was for teachers to elaborate on the questionnaires and reflect on the observed lessons. Semi-structured focus group interviews were also conducted with students who completed questionnaires. The interviews were video-recorded and ranged from 20-50 minutes. Five students from 1A, six students from 2A, and five students from 3A participated.

Procedure

First, I piloted my questionnaire to non-participants to identify problematic questions. Next, I sent the piloted questionnaires to the six teacher participants. To keep the data manageable, I distributed student questionnaires to four of the five classes I observed (1A General English, 2A English II, 2A Daily English, 3A Current English, but not 2H English II). I asked JTEs and ALTs who teach those classes to administer the questionnaires during class. Upon arriving in Japan, I collected the questionnaires and observed and video-recorded six team-taught classes (2A's Daily English class was observed twice).

I prepared interview questions based on the class observations and questionnaire result and distributed them to the teachers. However, these pre-constructed questions were merely a guide for the interview. These semi-structured interviews were conducted individually and audio-recorded. I gave a list of questions in English and Japanese to students in the focus group interviews.

During student interviews, I followed the questions more closely than in teacher interviews. These semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted with four to six students from the homerooms surveyed

and video-recorded. The focus group interviews allowed students to elaborate on questionnaire data. Finally, the data was transcribed and analyzed.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and analyze the quantitative data from Likert scale items on the questionnaires. Percentages indicating the degree to which participants agreed or disagreed with questionnaire items about ALT and JTE roles were examined to compare JTEs and ALTs' perceptions of their own and their partners' roles. These statistics were also used to compare students' perceptions of JTE and ALT roles with teachers' perceptions. The same process was applied to analyzing student responses on the questionnaire to statements regarding their overall perceptions of team teaching. A content analysis was applied to the qualitative data. Data from the interview transcriptions and open-ended questions on the teacher questionnaire was coded according to these four categories: re-occurring vocabulary, teachers' roles, and socio-political and cultural themes. Once coded, the data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and tallies were used to record instances in which items occurred under each category. These tallies provided insight into teachers and students' answers on the questionnaires and offered explanations for emerging trends. To further analyze the data, findings from this study were compared to the findings of previous studies (Burke, 2009; Mahoney, 2004; Scholefield, 1996; Tajino & Walker 1998a; Tajino & Walker, 1998b;).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Research Question 1: Are there any mismatches concerning JTE and ALT role perceptions between the three participants?

The initial expectation was that, as in Mahoney's (2004) study, the results would show a strong mismatch in role perceptions between JTEs and ALTs, but data from questionnaires and interviews revealed a clearer difference between the teachers' and the students' perceptions of JTE and ALT roles. However, the difference was more pronounced in the interview data. The most noticeable differences were associated with the following roles: 1. Explaining foreign cultures/customs, 2. Providing grammatical instruction, 3. Providing pronunciation instruction, and 4. Helping students

prepare for the exams. On the questionnaires, participants were given the first three roles and asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed that they expected JTEs or ALTs to fulfill each role. The fourth role was not on the questionnaire, but emerged from the interview data.

Table 5 demonstrates that students perceive explaining culture as an ALT role. In fact, 68.8% of students agreed this role belongs to ALTs. In contrast, only 39.3% agreed this is a JTE role, while 42.9% expressed neutrality, and 17% disagreed. The degree of variance indicates uncertainty in the JTE's ability to fulfill this role. The teachers, however, demonstrate 100% agreement that ALTs and JTEs can provide cultural instruction. These results contradict the JTEs in Tajino and Walker's (1998b) study which ranked teaching culture as the second lowest among JTE's duties, suggesting JTEs' perceptions of their roles may be expanding.

Table 5. Explaining Foreign Cultures/Customs (Questionnaire Data)

Role	Participants	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	No response
ALT	Students	0.9%	10.7%	18.8%	31.3%	37.5%	0.8%
	JTEs	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	ALTs	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
JTE	Students	3.6%	13.4%	42.9%	27.7%	11.6%	0.8%
	JTEs	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%	0%
	ALTs	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%

The divide between students and teachers' perceptions of who should teach culture is further highlighted by the interview results. To analyze the interview data, the number of instances in which certain JTE and ALT roles were mentioned was tallied. Table 6 reveals the tally of instances in which culture was cited as a role for each teacher during the interviews.

Table 6. Explaining Foreign Cultures/Customs (Interview Data)

Participants	JTE Role	ALT Role
Students	0	7
Teachers	6	10

The results show no instances of students referring to cultural instruction as a JTE role. When asked if JTEs could teach culture, one 3A student responded, "They are Japanese, not American," implying only Americans/*foreigners* could provide cultural knowledge. Furthermore, seven instances were recorded of students citing cultural instruction as an ALT role. In contrast, although 10 instances from the teacher interviews placed ALTs in the role of teaching culture, six instances referred to it as a JTE role. This suggests teachers are more positive that both JTEs and ALTs can fulfill this role. In fact, Ms. Johnson commented "...if the teachers are showing they respect and want to learn about each other's cultures, it helps students because they are modeling that," implying JTEs can help with cultural instruction by "modeling" interest in the ALT's culture. Mr. Yahashi also remarked:

ALT [*sic*] now are living in Japan and he or she has...some difficulty for [*sic*] cultural difference, but maybe most of them want to know about Japan and the history and the culture ...and not only [*sic*] teacher but also the students themselves can explain.

Mr. Yahashi's quote suggests teaching culture need not be one-sided, but rather an exchange among all participants. Furthermore, observation of an English II lesson between Mr. Yahashi and Mr. Anderson on the topic of Christmas revealed how both teachers contributed to cultural instruction. During the class, Mr. Yahashi asked Mr. Anderson questions about Christmas in America to help guide Mr. Anderson's discussion, and described his own experience celebrating Christmas in the U.S. Thus, the JTE (Mr. Yahashi) was able to model interest in the ALT's (Mr. Anderson) culture, and share the perspective of a Japanese person experiencing American culture.

With regards to ALTs teaching grammar, the results of the questionnaire, as displayed in Table 7, show that the greatest percentage of students expressed neutrality (42%); however, more students expressed disagreement (33%) than agreement (24.1%). Yet, 84.9% agreed grammar instruction is a JTE role. In comparison, although both JTEs and ALTs expressed a great degree of neutrality concerning the ALT teaching grammar (75% of JTEs and 50% of ALTs), unlike the students, neither group of teachers expressed disagreement. In fact, 50% of ALTs and 25% of JTEs agreed this was an ALT role. Thus, although 100% of ALTs and JTEs agreed that grammatical instruction is a JTE role, teachers show more of an indication than students that ALTs can contribute. The perceptions of JTEs in this study differ from those of JTEs in the previous studies (Scholefield, 1996;

Tajino & Walker, 1998b), which suggests JTEs are finding ways to contribute beyond grammatical instruction, and are more willing to share this role.

Table 7. Providing Grammatical Instruction (Questionnaire Data)

Role	Participants	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	No response
ALT	Students	8.9%	24.1%	42%	17%	7.1%	0.8%
	JTES	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	0%
	ALTs	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
JTE	Students	0.9%	2.7%	11.6%	30.4%	54.5%	0%
	JTEs	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	ALTs	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%

The difference in perspectives between students and teachers regarding ALTs' involvement in grammatical instruction is more pronounced in the interview data.

Table 8. Providing Grammatical Instruction (Interview Data)

Participants	JTE Role	ALT Role
Students	10	0
Teachers	9	6

Table 8 reveals students made no mention of grammar as an ALT role, yet in 10 instances students referred to grammar instruction as a JTE role. In fact, when asked whether students would prefer classes with only the ALT, a 2A student responded "If there are only ALT [*sic*], I think we cannot learn good grammar so both are important," suggesting ALTs are not capable of "good grammar" instruction; thus having both teachers is preferable. The teachers, however, presented a more balanced view. Six references were made to ALTs teaching grammar and nine to JTEs. Some concerns about ALTs teaching grammar were expressed, with Mr. Komatsu commenting, "You don't have to pay attention to the grammar. You can understand English. So maybe we, Japanese teachers and ALT don't have

the same point of view of the grammar" (implying JTEs may better understand students' difficulties since JTEs are NNSs). However, it was also suggested that ALTs could help JTEs teach current grammatical usage. On this topic, Ms. Otake remarked, "We JTE [*sic*] explain grammar in Japanese, but I think modern usage is more useful... so when I have a question in usage, [*sic*] ALT can explain it." Furthermore, Ms. Johnson detailed how she and Mr. Anderson helped a JTE coworker with his grammar questions, "He'll literally ask us, 'Would you actually say this sentence and would you use this sentence in writing or is this... a sentence you would speak?'...I think in that sense it's very beneficial having an ALT..." Thus, in contrast to the students, the teachers have found a place for the ALT in grammatical instruction.

Pronunciation instruction was also a role in which some variance between teachers and students was noted.

Table 9. Providing Pronunciation Instruction (Questionnaire Data)

Role	Participants	Strongly agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	No response
ALT	Students	0.9%	0%	15.2%	30.4%	52.7%	0.8%
	JTEs	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	ALTs	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
JTE	Students	0.9%	20.5%	41.1%	25.9%	10.7%	0.8%
	JTEs	0%	0%		75%	25%	0%
	ALTs	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
				0%			

Table 9 shows that although the majority of students expressed neutrality (41.1%) regarding pronunciation instruction as a JTE role and 36.6% expressed agreement, 21.4% disagreed. In contrast, 83.1% suggested pronunciation instruction as an ALT role, with 52.7% choosing strongly agree. Thus, students seem more certain this is an ALT role. This confirms results from Burke's (2009) study at the research site, which indicated students see the ALT as a pronunciation guide. However, teachers are more positive JTEs can teach pronunciation. In fact, both groups expressed 100% agreement that JTEs and ALTs can teach pronunciation. Again, these results differ from those of the JTEs in Tajino and Walker's (1998a) study, who

ranked pronunciation lowest as a JTE role. Thus, JTEs seem to be relying less on the ALT than in the past to teach pronunciation. The difference between students' and teachers' perceptions of pronunciation instruction is also reflected in the interview data.

Table 10. Providing Pronunciation Instruction (Interview Data)

Participants	JTE Role	ALT Role
Students	1	5
Teachers	4	12

Table 10 shows students made only one reference to JTEs teaching pronunciation. This was in response to the question, "Do you think the JTE can help with pronunciation instruction?" to which one 2A student said, "It depends on the teacher." The other students, however, indicated that they did not agree that JTEs could teach pronunciation. In fact, one 2A student answered, "Not at all. Some of the teachers are not good at pronunciation, so if they say 'Repeat after me,' sometimes I don't want to." Additionally, a 1A student stated, "[*sic*] JTE's English is a little bad," suggesting students doubt the JTE's pronunciation skills. These responses mirror earlier results from students at the research site who did not strongly indicate they liked the JTE to speak English in class (Burke, 2009). However, students referenced ALTs teaching pronunciation five times, showing support for pronunciation as an ALT role. Again, the teachers show more of an indication that ALTs and JTEs can teach pronunciation, referring to it as a JTE role in four instances and an ALT role in 12 instances. JTEs and ALTs seem to share the view that English is an international language, and can be spoken with different accents. On this topic Ms. Johnson remarked, "We're learning that there are many ways to have different pronunciations in English...you're listening to my English right now...but if you're communicating with another person, let's say from China...their English is going to sound totally different than mine." Mr. Komatsu also commented, "So [*sic*] ALT pronounce [*sic*] authentic [*sic*] for their way and [*sic*] Japanese teacher pronounce [*sic*] Japanese way. The students feel some difference." These quotes indicate teachers feel exposing students to different accents will make them competitive in a global society; thus, both teachers can teach pronunciation.

Concerning the role of exam preparation, results from the interviews (Table 11) reveal students made no reference to ALTs in this role, but suggested it for JTEs 10 times. When asked if ALTs could also help them pre-

pare for exams a 2A student explained, "...Japanese teacher took examination in Japan so they know but ALT is not [*sic*]," suggesting ALTs could not help because they have not taken the exams. However, teachers made nine references to JTEs helping with exam instruction and eight to ALTs. Yet, it should be noted only two references to ALTs contributing to exam preparation originated from JTEs. Nonetheless, these results show that, in contrast to the students, both teachers feel ALTs can aid in exam preparation. In fact, JTEs and ALTs mentioned ALTs can and do help students prepare for exams with spoken components. Of this Mr. Komatsu commented, "They help the students...who studies [*sic*] for the entrance examinations and they have [*sic*] interview." Therefore, even though ALTs have not taken the exams, teachers feel ALTs can help by sharing their knowledge of spoken English. Additionally, Mr. Yahashi suggested ALTs could help evaluate exams.

Table 11. Exam Preparation (Interview Data)

Participants	JTE Role	ALT Role
Students	10	0
Teachers	9	8

Research Question 2: How do the students perceive team teaching?

On the questionnaire, students were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: "I like the team-taught classes with the ALT better than the classes with a JTE only," and "I think team-taught classes are more useful in improving our English skills than classes taught by the JTE only." Results show 62.4% agreed they preferred team-taught classes and 82% reported team-taught classes are more useful for improving their English. In addition, all 15 students who participated in the interview agreed they favor team-taught classes. The students' responses not only demonstrate that they have a positive perception of team teaching, viewing it as a way to better their English skills, but also suggest a preference for classes with both teachers. These results are consistent with previous findings at the research site (Burke, 2009) and those in Tajino and Waker's (1998a) study.

Table 12. *I think team-taught classes are more useful in improving our English skills than classes taught with the JTE only (Questionnaire Data).*

Participants	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Students	0.8 %	0.8 %	16 %	38.3 %	43.7 %

Discussion

The most surprising finding was that, unlike Mahoney's (2004) teachers, no strong role perception conflicts were identified between JTEs and ALTs. In fact, more of a mismatch existed between students and teachers' perceptions of ALT and JTE roles. While students appeared to be placing JTEs and ALTs into distinct roles with ALTs teaching foreign culture/customs and pronunciation and JTEs teaching grammar and exam preparation, the teachers seemed more open to sharing these roles. This view differs from that of JTEs in previous studies (Scholefield, 1996; Tajino & Walker, 1998b). One possibility for the contradictions with previous research is that role perceptions among teachers may be changing. The teachers' view that both ALTs and JTEs can contribute to grammar, pronunciation, cultural, and exam preparation instruction, suggests ALTs may no longer be simply tape recorders, and JTEs may have found a more secure place in team-taught classes. Mr. Yahashi commented on this change in perception:

maybe for the first time Japanese English teacher [*sic*] were not accustomed to [*sic*] team teach...and first...we used the ALT like a tape recorder and now of course I don't want [*sic*] ALT to team teach like that and I want to know how he or she think [*sic*] or want to do in the lesson.

While one might assume these *new* role perceptions result from teachers who are themselves new, all JTEs in this study have taught for more than 20 years; therefore, their perspectives may stem from becoming "accustomed" to team teaching, as Mr. Yahashi's quote suggests, since team teaching has been practiced in Japan for over 30 years (Monkasho, 1994). These perceptions may also result from the fact that Mr. Anderson and Ms. Johnson have been working at the school on a daily basis for over two years. Therefore, in contrast to schools with visiting ALTs where the ALT

may come only once a week, the ALTs at the research site have had a chance to form solid relationships with the JTEs and demonstrate their abilities. Mr. Yahashi commented on this when he spoke of his partnership with Ms. Johnson:

She and I are every day in the...English lesson and after the lesson we go together to the same class and she knows [*sic*] well about our students and maybe we have a good relationship, at least I trust her. In such relationships...we can get a good role, ah shared.

However, further research is needed to determine whether the teachers' responses are indicative of change. If a change is occurring, additional research is necessary to confirm if this is a trend in team teaching throughout Japan and to clearly determine the reasons behind this change.

Although ALTs and JTEs suggested in the questionnaire and interviews that the roles could be shared, the fact that students placed the teachers in distinct roles may suggest some of the students' responses reflect what they see in the classroom. Perhaps, either the teachers are not fully putting their ideals into practice, or while they may be sharing some roles, the ratio of sharing is not completely equal. The class observations revealed ALTs often led conversation classes, and JTEs led grammar-heavy exam classes. Additionally, the interview data revealed eight instances of ALTs describing how they create roles for themselves, suggesting ALTs still do not feel as involved as they would like in certain lessons. For instance, Mr. Anderson commented, "...the teacher didn't ask me to walk around the classroom, but I started doing it" referring to how he assumed the role of monitoring students while the JTE was teaching. Therefore, although static perceptions of JTE and ALT roles seem to be changing slightly, there are still changes to be made.

The second research question revealed students have an overall positive perception of team teaching, seeing team-taught lessons as more useful in improving their English, and prefer a combination of teachers. This preference could be attributed to students' perception that JTEs are most suited to teaching grammar and exam preparation and ALTs are most suited to teaching culture and pronunciation. If students perceive these roles as specific to each teacher, it is only natural that they would feel a combination of teachers would be the most advantageous. A 3A student expressed this, stating, "Only [*sic*] Japanese teacher's English class is...a little boring because they only teach us grammar and words, but if an ALT is there they

can teach us about culture and pronunciation and many things.” The students’ preference for team taught classes demonstrates an awareness of the benefits of having a NNS and a NS in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study revealed more of a mismatch in role perceptions between students and teachers than between JTEs and ALTs. Students suggested distinct roles for ALTs (teaching culture and pronunciation) and JTEs (teaching grammar and exam preparation) whereas JTEs and ALTs seemed more open to sharing these roles. These results contradicted those of previous studies (Mahoney, 2004; Scholefield, 1996; Tajino & Walker, 1998b). A possible explanation for these contradictions is that teacher’s perceptions of ALT and JTE roles may be changing as JTEs become more accustomed to team teaching and as visiting ALTs are replaced by ALTs who remain at the school for extended periods of time. While it appears progress is being made in the team teaching relationship, there are still challenges to address. For instance, the mismatch between student and teacher perceptions suggests a 50/50 partnership is needed with both teachers contributing on a more equal basis to the instruction of grammar, culture, pronunciation, and exam preparation. This would allow students to see both teachers as capable of filling each role. It would also enable Japanese teachers to serve as role models of NNSs who can communicate in the target language, which might inspire more students to use English. Furthermore, a more balanced sharing of the roles would ensure native-like English is not seen as the ultimate goal. Thus, instead of striving for the elusive native-like proficiency, students will focus on the attainable goal of making their point understood. In this way, students may be more accepting of JTEs teaching pronunciation. Moreover, the students’ lack of confidence in the JTE’s pronunciation and cultural knowledge, as well as the ALT’s ability to contribute to grammar instruction and exam preparation, could be appeased through the application of training and technology. ALTs and JTEs could rely on their individual strengths to train each other. For instance, JTEs could offer workshops for ALTs on grammar instruction. However, it might also help to only hire ALTs with TESOL/TEFL training. JTEs could also provide an explanation of how the exam system works and share test-taking strategies. ALTs could then provide language training for JTEs. In addition, teleconferences could be arranged with classrooms in English speaking countries. This would give JTEs an additional opportunity to practice speaking English and allow them more direct involvement with introducing culture.

The second research question revealed students prefer the combined instruction of JTEs and ALTs and find team-taught classes more beneficial for improving their English than classes with JTEs only. These results suggest the school might want to offer more team-taught classes. Currently ALTs only go to class once or twice a week, and third year students not in the English Course do not have class with ALTs.

Although this study is too small for its results to be generalizable, the possibility exists that progress is being made in the team teaching relationship as the paradigm evolves. Furthermore, despite lingering challenges facing team teaching, students still find benefits in the combined efforts and talents of a NS and NNS teaching team.

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