Enhancing Young Learners' English Language Ability Through Group Dynamics Teaching of

Conversation Strategies

March 2025 Final AR Report

by

Amy Braun

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies

Graduate School – MA in TESOL Program

March 29, 2025

Introduction

Background

I taught a class of twenty-seven second-graders at a private elementary school during the 2024 school year. Eight of these students were in my first-grade class last year. The school is relatively new and is in the process of developing its English curriculum. It has shifted its focus to test scores based on the TOEFL Primary testing system. There were plans to group the students by their English ability, but that plan was abandoned by May. The students used the *Our World* Book 2 textbook by National Geographic Learning, the Jolly Phonics app, and workbooks to improve their phonics skills. The January TOEFL Primary test scores placed these students at CEFR A1 for listening and CEFR A1 for reading, with their average TOEFL Primary score at 208.66. This total score is up two points from their August total scores, but they are the lowest among the three second grade classes. Yet, the class comprised students with varying English language experience levels. Some had graduated from an English immersion preschool, some were attending eikaiwa or Kumon, some had weekly even English lessons at their kindergartens or daycares, and some had no experience with English before entering first grade.

When I started teaching this class in April 2023, I wanted to focus more on communication skills, mainly speaking. I wanted to explore how communicative strategies could build students' strategic competence (Savignon, 1983) in communication with their classmates. I also wanted to see how Near Peer Role Models (NPRMs) could help improve students' English proficiency through group and peer activities and student-centered learning. The use of NPRMs was supported by the concepts of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Zone of Proximal Adjusting (ZPA, Murphey, 2013). I am starting from scratch as most students are only familiar with basic CSs. Out of my class of twenty-six students, only eight were introduced to five CSs by the end of the

previous school year.

Issues

I have one challenge this year. I will not have the support of another teacher (T2) for my English class this year. A T2 is crucial as they assist the students during activities, help manage the class, and support me during speaking tests. With all Grade 2 English classes scheduled at the same time, having an extra teacher to provide support becomes even more crucial.

Most students are eager to participate in English classes, as indicated by the weekly Action Logs and quarterly surveys conducted since April. The students exhibit a variety of communication and learning styles, with some being talkative and adept at reading and writing, while others are still developing these skills and may require more support. Additionally, some students work quickly and independently, while others work slower and may need task assistance.

I encountered some challenges while trying to conduct interviews with students. I conducted the interviews at three different times: before the first period, during morning recess, and during afternoon recess. Some students were willing to give up their recess time to speak with me, but others preferred to play with their friends. Since the students are only seven years old, there were occasions when they needed me to provide multiple-choice answers, as they struggled to respond independently. At one point, a student attempted to answer on behalf of their peers by saying, "I don't know," and simply chose the first option I provided, making it difficult to get a clear response.

<div style="text-align: center">**Literature Review**</div>

Communicative Language Teaching

Richards and Rodgers (2014) emphasized that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) prioritizes communicative competence over grammatical and lexical knowledge. It focuses on using language in real-life situations rather than isolated language forms (Richard & Rodgers, 2014, p. 136). CLT differs from the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) in its adaptability. ALM attempts to standardize language teaching with a "one size fits all" approach, using one method for various contexts and age groups. On the other hand, in CLT, instructors must acknowledge that the language used in the classroom reflects "an expression of self and of how meanings are created and exchanged" (Savignon, 1987, p. 21). Spada (2007) summarized the challenge of defining CLT universally: "What is communicative language teaching? The answer to this question seems to depend on whom you ask" (p. 2007). This flexibility in design and procedures is why CLT is more accurately viewed as an approach rather than a rigid method.

Additionally, Brown (2007) defined CLT as "an approach to language teaching methodology that emphasizes authenticity, interaction, student-centered learning, task-based activities, and communication for the real world, meaningful purposes." He came up with these characteristics of CLT:

(1) Classroom goals focus on all aspects of communicative competence, not just grammar or language.

(2) Language techniques aim to engage learners in using language authentically for real functional purposes. Hinkel wrote in his 2006 article for *TESOL Quarterly* that "in the age of globalization, the pragmatic objective of language learning places an increased value on integrated and dynamic multiskilled instructional models with a

focus on meaningful communication and the development of learners' communicative competence" (p. 113).

(3) Fluency and accuracy are complementary communication techniques. However, fluency may sometimes be more important than accuracy to keep learners engaged in language use.

(4) In the communicative classroom, students must use the language productively and receptively in unrehearsed contexts. (Brown, 2015, pp. 31-32)

(5) Integrating the four language skills within a communicative approach involves integrating one or more skills and connecting language with our cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes (Brown, 2007, p. 286).

Communicative Competence

Savignon (1998) states that communication is about expressing, interpreting, and negotiating meaning. One can improve by practicing speaking. Hymes (1972) introduced "communicative competence," referring to understanding social norms and contexts without complete knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. He emphasized the importance of sociolinguistic rules through social interaction, contrary to Noam Chomsky's "ideal speaker-listener." Savignon (1972, 1983, 1998) stated combining linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse rules in communicative interactions is crucial (see Figure 1). Canale and Swain (1980) argued that exposure to realistic situations is essential, while in 1987, Savignon argued the opposite: "[C]communication confidence leads to communication competence."

Figure 1

The four components of communicative competence (Savignon, 1983)
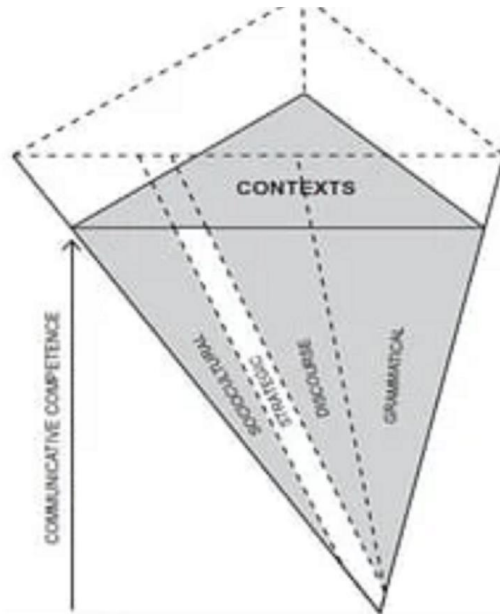
According to Figure 1, strategic competence is the first step in developing practical communication skills. It is highly beneficial for achieving the main goals of CLT, which aim to build solid communicative competence in second language (L2) learners. Strategic competence allows individuals to use strategies to compensate for imperfect knowledge or performance limitations. Considering the student's age, metacognitive abilities, and current stage in L2 learning development is crucial.

There is ongoing debate about the effectiveness of CLT. Swan (1985) criticized CLT for theoretical and practical issues. CLT needs a unified approach, leading to clarity in its application. Ridge (2014) analyzed CLT and found that the practice suggested a consensus on "communicative competence" and for not emphasizing grammar instruction, allowing for potentially incorrect utterances.

Communication Strategies

Communication Strategies (CSs) are techniques speakers use to express their meaning when encountering communication difficulties. According to Corder (1981), They are "a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his (or her) meaning when faced with some difficulty" (p. 103). These strategies offer the ability to develop strategic competence, an essential aspect of communicative competence (CC) and CLT (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983). Savignon (2002) defines CSs as "coping strategies used in unfamiliar contexts, where constraints arise from imperfect knowledge of rules, fatigue or distraction. The goal of using communicative strategies in the classroom is not to perfect them or the language itself, but to overcome communication breakdown, solve performance problems, and compensate for the speaker's deficits". Various researchers and teachers list different totals of CSs. Kindt has listed 39 CSs on his website, while Kehe and Kehe have listed 26 in their 2022 book *Conversation Strategies: Pair and Group Activities for Developing Communicative Competence*.

Group Dynamics

Researchers have recently suggested that small groups are beneficial for second-language classroom activities. Some researchers have argued that using small groups positively impacts language learning from a pedagogical perspective. In contrast, others have claimed that it is beneficial from a psycholinguistic point of view. Language teachers first embraced the idea of pair and group tasks in the 1980s. Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) stated in their book *Group Dynamics in the Classroom* that group cohesiveness promotes acceptance among students, public commitment to the group, a system of development within learner groups, and that group tasks align with the basis of CLT. Moreover, Guk and Kellogg (2007) have mentioned that student-student interaction can lead to vigorous development of ZPD.
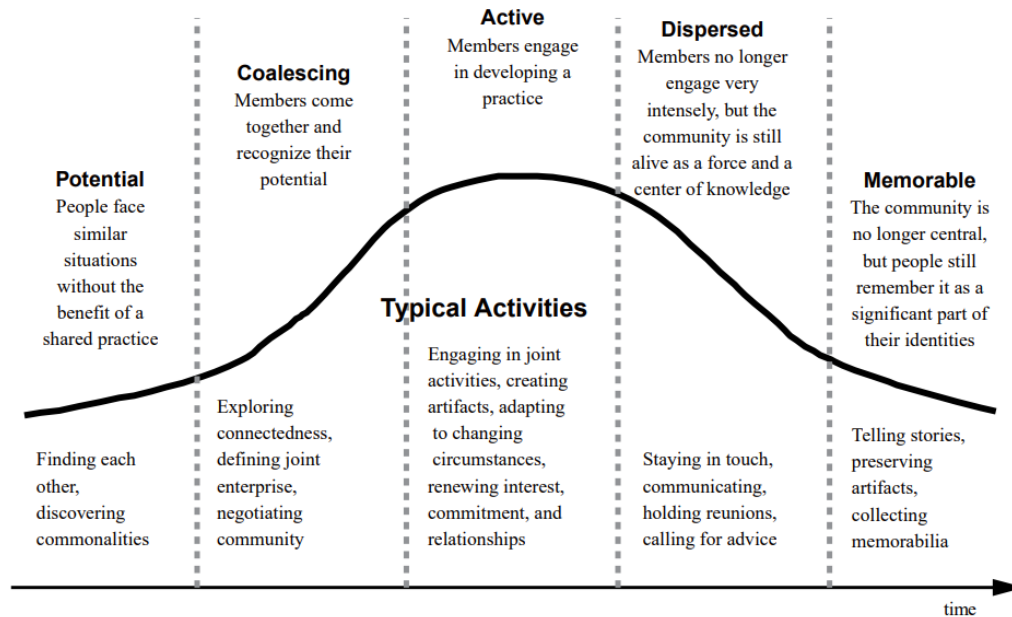
Long and Porter (1985) researched how group work relates to second language acquisition (SLA) and interlanguage. Their study revealed that students received more opportunities to practice language skills in group work settings. The researchers also observed more instances of correction during group activities than teacher-centered ones, and the students achieved the same level of accuracy in a group setting. Long and Porter found "that students of mixed [second language] (SL) proficiencies tend to obtain more practice in negotiation than same proficiency dyads, suggesting that teachers of mixed ability classes would do well to opt for heterogeneous (over homogeneous) ability grouping".

According to Murphey and Arao (2001), NPRMs share similarities regarding age, ethnicity, gender, interests, past or present experiences, and proximity and frequency of social contact. Moreover, Murphey and Murakami (1998) state that NPRMs "at a similar, or even slightly lower overall linguistic level can positively affect change in learner beliefs". Peers can act as role models and demonstrate the "next step" in language learning,. Futhermore, NPRMs also foster a sense of community of practice (COP), which was defined by Wenger-Tryner (2013) as "share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly". Wegner (1998) labeled five stages of development of CoP, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Stages of Development in a Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998)

Potential
People face
similar
situations
without the
benefit of a
shared practice

Finding each
other,
discovering
commonalities

Coalescing
Members come
together and
recognize their
potential

Exploring
connectedness,
defining joint
enterprise,
negotiating
community

Active
Members engage
in developing a
practice

Typical Activities

Engaging in joint
activities, creating
artifacts, adapting
to changing
circumstances,
renewing interest,
commitment, and
relationships

Dispersed
Members no longer
engage very
intensely, but the
community is still
alive as a force and a
center of knowledge

Staying in touch,
communicating,
holding reunions,
calling for advice

Memorable
The community is
no longer central,
but people still
remember it as a
significant part of
their identities

Telling stories,
preserving
artifacts,
collecting
memorabilia

time

The influences of NPRMs can be seen in various forms such as newsletters, language learning histories, and topical videos. However, it can be challenging to explore some of these forms, especially language learning histories, due to the limited cognitive abilities and prior knowledge of young learners. Nonetheless, NPRMs can be associated with cooperative learning. The main idea behind cooperative learning is that teachers can use cooperative learning methods to help students meet the three classroom needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy because all students are human. Jacobs, Power, and Loh (2002) developed eight principles, which are the following:

(1) Cooperation as a value

(2) Heterogeneous grouping

(3) Positive interdependence

(4) Individual accountability

(5) Simultaneous interaction

(6) Equal participation

(7) Collaborative skills

(8) Group autonomy

Cooperative Learning

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1994) define Cooperative Learning (CL) as "the instructional use of small groups where students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (p. 4). This approach is ideal for transitioning from teacher-centered lessons to more learner-centered ones, as educators cannot directly facilitate learning; instead, students actively engage together to achieve understanding. Laurier (2013) suggested that CL can support a communicative language approach. Olsen and Kagan (1992) describe CL as "a group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups, with each learner held accountable for their own learning and motivated to enhance the learning of others" (p. 8). This definition aligns with the concept of NPRM, which emphasizes peers with similar goals working together through group or pair activities while motivating one another in the learning process.

Similar to the eight principles developed by Jacobs, Power, and Loh (2002) for NPRM, Kagan and Kagan (2009) suggested four principles, named PIES, for the success of CL implantation. They are:

1. Positive Interdependence: Positive interdependence creates mutual support and students: creates peer norms, favoring achievement, and increases the frequency and quality of peer tutoring.

2. Individual Accountability: Individual accountability dramatically increaases student participation and motivation to achieve.

3. Equal Participation: Students who would participate very little become engaged when we equalize participation.

4. Simultaneous Interaction: The amount of participation per student and or efficiency in teaching and managing the classroom are increased enormously when we use simultaneous rather than sequential structures. (p. 82)

CL structures provide greater opportunities for language development and content integration by fostering increased active communication, enhancing the complexity of interactions, and improving comprehension (Olsen & Kagan, 1992). Unlike traditional teacher-centered classrooms, where student communication tends to be sequential and the teacher dominates the conversation, CL allows students to engage in active discussions with one another. This approach not only boosts the quality and quantity of discourse but also requires learners to understand the information they receive in order to complete tasks with their peers (Olsen & Kagan, 1992). Johnson et al. (1994) found that CL fosters more positive relationships, higher academic achievement, critical thinking, and personal as well as academic support. Similar to NPRM, students work together to enhance each other's English abilities rather than solely focusing on their individual skills.

Kagan and Kagan (2009) suggest that groups of four work best in the classroom because they facilitate pair work, prevent the issue of an odd person out, and enhance variety. However, during the year this survey was conducted, it was not possible to have an additional group of three or four due to a lack of space and tables. As a result, at least two or three groups had five members. Kagan and Kagan also identified four types of teams: heterogeneous, random,

homogeneous, and student-selected. Heterogeneous teams consist of mixed abilities, while random teams are formed entirely by chance. Homogeneous teams are made up of students who share similar characteristics. The lifespan of a group or team can vary, lasting for a year, a quarter, or even a single activity. For my research, I had six heterogeneous groups selected by the teacher, and they worked together for a month. Their roles were either assigned by the teacher or chosen by the group, depending on the activity at hand. Kagan and Kagan (2009) emphasized that assigning specific roles to each student enhances teamwork and makes cooperative learning more effective. Similarly, Olsen and Kagan (1992) pointed out that rotating roles among group members enables everyone to learn and practice a variety of skills. For students to develop competence, they must be prepared to embrace these responsibilities. However, there are times when students may refuse to participate due to a lack of knowledge and skills. Clearly defining roles and the corresponding abilities can help minimize the chances of students either not participating or dominating the discussion. Additionally, along with these roles, specific gambits can be assigned, which suggest "what students can say or do to fulfill their responsibilities" (p. 291). These gambits serve various language functions, such as facilitating turn-taking, signaling intent, controlling the tone and direction of the discussion, and ensuring a smooth conclusion to the conversation (Coelho, 1992). Table 1 provides a sample of role assignments, along with brief descriptions and gambits utilized by the students in the current study.

Table 1

Role Assignments and Gambits

Roles	Description	Gambits
Leader	Fixes problems, tells others to try, help others to keep working	"What is wrong?", "Your turn", "Please (do this)"
Writer	Writes on Worksheet/paper, write down ideas	"One more time please", "How do you spell that?"
English Monitor	Make sure English is used, make sure everyone can do the activity in English	"English please!", "What is that in English?", "(Neko) is (cat) in English"
Reporter	Says what they saw, Share group ideas to the class	"Number (One) is…", "It is…", "We think…", "We wrote…"
Time Keeper	Keeps track of time, Tells the team how much time is left	"We have _____ minutes left", "Let's hurry up!"

The word "structure" has been defined by Kagan and Kagan (2009) as how teachers and students interact with the lesson. Some structures that were used in this study and their brief descriptions and functions are listed below in Table 2, adapted from Kagan and Kagan (2009).

Table 2

Overview of Selected Learning Structures.

Structure	Description
Mix-Pair-Share	The class "mixes" until the teacher calls "pair". Students find a new partner to start aa conversation. The student shares information and in some cases write the gathered information for further use.
Team-2-Team	Teams do a presentation in front another team. The audience can give comments for improvement and praise after the presentation.
Team Projects	Teammates assign roles to each other and work together to create a project.
Mind-Mapping Brainstorming	Teammates put their head together to share information and visually organize their ideas.
Find Someone Who	Students move about the room to find someone else who matches a certain criterion.
Match Mine Matching Game	Partners on opposite sides of a barrier communicate with precision, attempting to match the other's arrangement of pieces on worksheet or cards from a vocabulary set.

AR Goal

I want to enhance my students' English proficiency and communicative competence through teaching communicative strategies (CSs), a teaching pedagogy that uses Near Peer Role Models (NPRMs), Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and Zone of Proximal Adjusting (ZPA) while receiving feedback from both students and teachers.

Research Questions

1. What impact, if any, do conversation strategies based on collaborative activities have on expanding one's communicative competence?

2. How could NPRMs help improve the English ability between the group of students I taught last year and the others?

Research Design Map

* Green indicates that data will be pull from
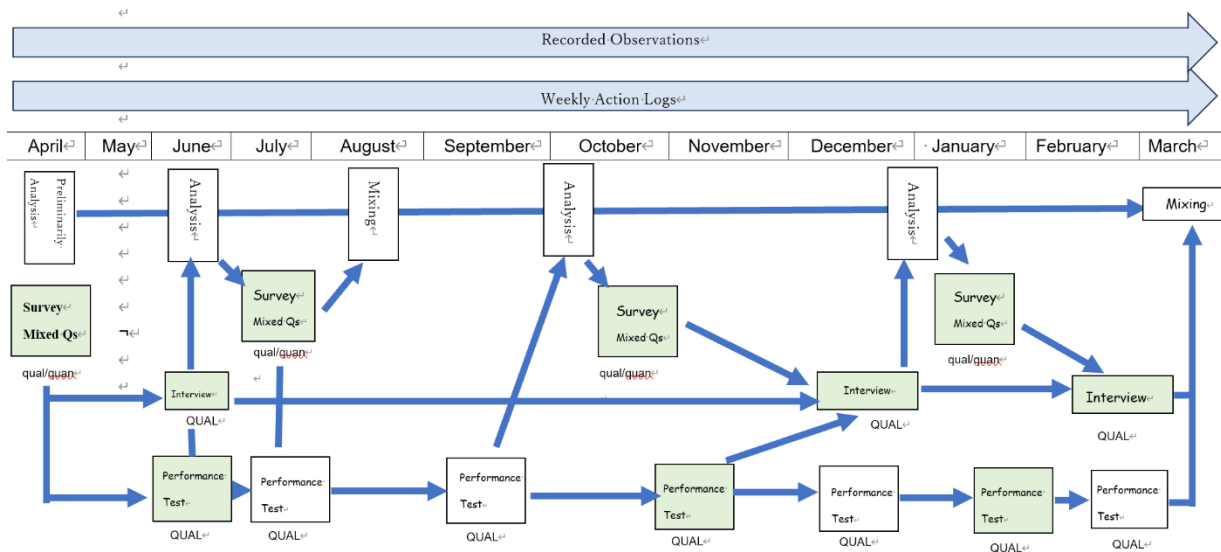
Methods

Since April, I have been concentrating on CSs, CLT, and group cohesion with my students. This period has represented a significant learning experience for my students and me. Between April and March, the students acquired or revisited various CSs, including rejoinders, openers, closers, rejoinders, fillers, follow-up questions, clarification request, doubling the question, and shadowing. I aimed to incorporate these strategies into the students' speaking activities, helping to spread and encourage usage among their peers. Additionally, the students participated in a pair-based speaking test during the same month. Over one quarter term, the class was scheduled to take two speaking tests, one of which were used for research. This report also includes how collaborative learning effected the students' learning of English as a second language. Audio and video observations were recorded of certain activities that were done in the classroom.

Three out of eight students I taught last year were designated as focus participants for this study in the preceding academic year. Meanwhile, two students who I did not teach last year were included as focus participants to see how NPRMs and collaborative learning could help them to learn CSs and excel their English language ability. To protect the student's identity, this report uses pseudonyms instead of their real names. The research employed a mixed methods approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative data were primarily derived from speaking tests, in which the frequency of communication strategies employed by the focus students during their recorded performances was systematically quantified. Qualitative data were gathered from various sources, including action logs, interviews conducted in December, post-test surveys, and quarterly surveys. The post-test survey consisted of nine items designed to evaluate aspects of group cohesion, CSs, and CLT to the student's test

performance. This survey incorporated Likert scale questions and open-ended responses to capture a comprehensive range of feedback. An additional twenty-three-item survey was administered to assess the students' attitudes and perceptions at the start of each quarter (April, July, October, and January) and at the end of the academic year (March). Action logs were completed weekly, except during the weeks when surveys were administered. The student's written action logs documented their feedback and reflections, contributing to a diary-like account to inform subsequent action logs. In addition, private interviews were conducted with the five focus students, each with eight specifically tailored questions.

The students engaged in reflective practices by reviewing recordings of their speaking tests. This reflective process involved watching the videos and utilizing a color-coded system on a worksheet to facilitate their analysis. Students then shared their reflections with their speaking test partners. Additionally, commencing this academic year, students were required to reflect on class objectives extending beyond speaking skills and to establish new goals for the upcoming quarter. Students also participated in reflective activities associated with a monthly newsletter, which featured questions, advice, and comments derived from action logs, surveys, and interviews conducted by students and the instructor.

Results

Regarding Research Question #1

When asked to rate the statement "I could say what I want to say in English by using conversation strategies" on the post-test survey for March, the average rating among focus students was 3.2, which is slightly above three, indicating that they felt they were able to communicate effectively, This score is slightly lower than the average response of 3.5 from July.

Kisora mentioned in June that using CSs has made speaking English "kushikunaku naru" （*less difficult*). She also stated in December that CSs were helpful for her when speaking English because "making the questions is long talking." Mamoru noted in both June and December that CSs helped him express what he wanted to say in English. Sumire explained that CSs were beneficial for her "because machigaete kaiwa no kakushiaji wo tsukattara machigaeta tokoro ga nanka machigaenai kanji ni naru (*because when I made a small mistake and used conversation strategies, the mistake somehow didn't feel like a mistake)*. Tsuyoshi, in the January interview, indicated that CSs helped him but admitted he did not use enough during a review of a recent speaking test recording. During that discussion, I reassured him that he had utilized some CSs and pointed them out at specific moments in the video. By the March interview, Tsuyoshi's response was more positive; he agreed that CSs support him in expressing himself in English and noted that they allow him to say more. Meanwhile, Kenta agreed in both June and December that CSs helped him speak more English, although he did not elaborate on why.

When asked about which CSs they found important, the responses varied among the students. Kisora emphasized the significance of follow-up questions, stating that "using questions speaks more." Sumire highlighted the importance of "doubling the question," also referred to as "hints please," explaining that "wakaranai toki tasukete kureru" *(it helps me when I do not know)*". Kenta expressed that shadowing was crucial for him because "speaking is easier", as it reassured him that the interlocutor was actively listening. However, both Mamoru and Kenta were uncertain about which CSs were important to them.

Table 2

The number of CSs used in the March 2024 speaking test.

	Kenta	Kisora	Mamoru
Openers/Closers/ Rejoinders	2	4	3
Shadowing	0	2	1
Follow-up Questions	2	0	0
Clarification Request	0	2	0
Total	**4**	**8**	**4**

Table 3

The number of CSs used in the July 2024 speaking test.

	Kenta	Kisora	Mamoru	Sumire	Tsuyoshi
Openers/Closers	2	2	2	2	2
Shadowing	3	0	1	3	3
Rejoinders	3	0	3	3	3
Follow-up Questions	1	2	2	2	2
Total	**12**	**4**	**8**	**10**	**11**

Table 4

The number of CSs used in the November 2024 speaking test.

	Kenta	Kisora	Mamoru	Sumire	Tsuyoshi
Openers/Closers	1	2	1	2	2
Shadowing	0	0	0	2	2
Follow-up Questions	0	2	0	2	3
Clarification Request	0	0	0	1	0
Rejoinders	0	2		3	4
Doubling the Question	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**1**	**6**	**6**	**10**	**11**

Table 5

The number of CSs used in the February 2024 speaking test.

	Kenta	Kisora	Mamoru	Sumire	Tsuyoshi
Openers/Closers\	2	2	2	2	3
Shadowing	2	4	2	2	4
Follow-up Questions	2	4	1	1	4
Clarification Request	0	0	0	0	0
Rejoinders	3	4	0	1	4
Doubling the Question	0	2	0	0	0
Fillers	0	0	0	3	0
Total	**9**	**12**	**5**	**7**	**11**

The four figures above represent the quantitative counts of how many CSs were used during two-minute speaking tests conducted four times throughout the year: March 2024, July 2024, November 2024, and February 2025. From the data, it is evident that Kisora increased her usage of CSs from four at the end of grade one to twelve at the end of grade two. Additionally, she demonstrated a greater diversity in her strategies, using only two CSs in March 2024 and increasing to five by February 2025. Kenta also increased his usage of CSs, rising from four in March 2024 to nine in February 2025. Notably, Kenta's lowest usage occurred in November 2024 when he was paired with a partner who had lower English proficiency and was in a different grade one class. During their speaking test, they engaged in playful banter instead of meaningful conversation during the two allotted minutes. This was a stark contrast to Kenta's performance in July 2025, when he used twelve CSs and actively assisted his partner, who, despite having a lower English ability, was a friend in the same grade one class. Meanwhile, Tsuyoshi maintained a consistent total usage of eleven CSs across the two tests. In contrast, both Mamoru and Sumire experienced a decrease in their usage of CSs between the July 2024 and February 2025 speaking tests.

The following two transcriptions details two conversations with Kisora during the November 2024 speaking test and February 2025 speaking test with two different partners.

```
03  Kisora  <what time> (0.1) do you (0.5) take a shower? [0:20]
04  Keisuke  take a. (0.1) shower? (0.2) ん:: (n:, hmm) (0.3) >five o'clock.<
[0:31]
05  Kisora  oK:: (0.2) (why) do you (0.1) do you (0.1) あ (a, ah) take a
shower? [0:45]
06  Keisuke  ん:: (n:, hmm) [0:47]
```

07 ((Keisuke tilts his head down and looks down)) [0:51]

08 ((Keisuke shake the paper in his left hand and by the left side of his head)) [0:58]

09 Keisuke ((ええと (eeto., well) どうして (doushite, why)) [0:59]

10 ((Keisuke looks up and to the right side of Kisora)) [1:01]

11 Keisuke ええ (ee, umm) >five o'clock< [1:05]

12 ((Kisora comes closer to Keisuke, cups her left hand to her mouth to whisper something to Keisuke)) [1:08]

13 Keisuke よ ((yo?)) [1:10]

14 ((Kisora cups her left hand to her mouth again to whisper something to Keisuke)) [1:13]

15 Keisuke ええと (eeto, umm) あ 何 (a:. nani?, um, what) [1:15]

16 Kisora oh: real::ly? [1:22]

In the above transcription from November 2024 speaking test, Kisora (who has a higher English speaking ability) attempted to ask Keisuke (who has a lower English speaking ability) about his daily routines. One of her questions was "<what time> (0.1) do you (0.5) take a shower?" in line 03. It prompted an easy response from Keisuke, who mentioned that he showers at five o'clock in line 05. In line 06, Kisora asked him why he takes a shower, which caused Keisuke to pause and think about his answer. He looked down, shook the paper in his hand, and then glanced up to the left, contemplating what to say. In lines 12 and 14, Kisora tried to whisper something to Keisuke, but it's unclear in the video recording whether she was whispering the Japanese translation of her question, as it was not audible. In line 15, Keisuke seemed unsure and asked, "What?" as he struggled to come up with an answer to Kisora's question. To quickly conclude the drawn-out exchange, Kisora replied in line 16 with a hesitated

rejoinder: "`oh: real::ly?`". After observing this interaction right after the speaking test, I felt that Kisora didn't provide Keisuke with any choices in her question, which left him unsure of how to respond and led to a communication breakdown. This conversation inspired me to introduce the communication strategy "doubling the question" in the next unit.

```
14  Kisora  how about you? | what is in your dream room? a sofa? a bed? a
light? [0:43]
                            | ((Daiki looks up to the ceiling))
15  Daiki  | ああ (aA, umm) (0.1) window. (0:47)
           | ((Daiki looks at Aoi's dream house drawing on the table)
16  ((Daiki gives Kisora a brief glance)) [0:48]
17  Kisora  a window:? [0:50]
18  Daiki  | >NO.< [0:51]
           | ((Daiki smiles at Aoi and then looks at his dream hous drawing,
laughing)) [0:53]
19  Daiki  computer. [0:54]
20  Kisora  a computer? oh:: that's nice. [1:00]
21  ((Kisora and Daiki look to the right)) [1:04]
22  Kisora what is- do compu::ter? あ (a, um)  see Youtube? (sof-?) あ (a, um)
ma- [1:13]
23  Daiki  =あ (a, um) crazy game アンド (ando, and) poke(mon). [1:17]
24  Kisora  a CRAzy game. that's nice. [1:21]
```

The transcription above is from a speaking test conducted in February 2025 between Kisora, who has a higher English proficiency, and Daiki, who transferred to the class in August 2024 and has a lower English ability. In Lines 12 and 22, Kisora employs the CS "doubling the question,"

where she gives Daiki three hints to help him understand the question and encourage a response. For instance, in Line 14, Kisora asks, "`how about you? | what is in your dream room? a sofa? a bed? a light?`" In Line 22, she asks, "`what is- do compu::ter? あ (a, um) see Youtube? (sof-?) あ (a, um) ma-`" This approach aids Daiki in responding to her questions. He initially makes a mistake in Line 17 by answering about Kisora's dream room, but he corrects himself in Line 22 when he realizes he needs to talk about his own dream room. By using the CS "doubling the question," Kisora was able to facilitate a smoother and more extended conversation with Daiki. However, it's noteworthy that she used twice as many hints in February compared to November.

On Research Question #2

In the July survey, when asked to complete the statement "I learn better with," three students—Kenta, Tsuyoshi, and Kisora—selected "Someone who has better English than me." Kenta and Kisora consistently gave the same response in the January and March surveys. In contrast, Tsuyoshi changed his answer to "Someone who has the same English level" in both the January and March surveys. However, during an interview on March 18, 2025, Tsuyoshi expressed that he believes someone with a higher English ability would be more beneficial for his English learning. We did not delve deeper into why his perspective changed during the interview. Sumire also chose "Someone who has the same English level" in the July, January, and March surveys. Nevertheless, in her interview on March 18, 2025, she stated that she thinks differently from her survey response and believes that someone with a higher English ability would benefit her learning. She mentioned that a person with a higher level of English could teach her. However, Sumire expressed in the December interview that wished that some of her peers would stop fooling around during activities or the teacher's explanation as she felt it was

annoying and disruptive to her learning. Mamoru initially chose "Someone who has worse English than me" in July, then switched to "Someone who has better English than me" in January, before reverting back to "Someone who has worse English than me" in March. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to interview Mamoru in March regarding his return to the choice of "Someone who has worse English than me." However, in December, when asked why he made that choice, Mamoru reflected that although he found group and pair activities fun, he did not feel they were effective in helping him improve his English. He stated that he learned from his friends during these activities.

Kenta said that his experience was so good because his pair activities partner in the classroom, Hikaru (who has a higher level of English ability), helps him communicate better by telling him what kind of questions Kenta should use and what kind of phrases, words, and questions Kenta uses in their conversations. Hikaru can also decrease the ratio of silence by following his suggestions. Kenta went on further to explain that he appreciates his partner's support. When asked about his experiences in the December interview, he could not recall any instances where someone with higher English ability helped him.

The transcription excerpt below shows how Kenta (who has a higher level of English ability) helps Isamu ask a question to open a turn:

```
09  |(((Isamu looks down at his conversation card))) [0:29]

10  Kenta  °how about you?° [0:31]

11  Isamu  How- (.) [ん? [0:34]

12                 [|((Isamu tilts his head)) [0:34]

12  |(((Kenta looks back and forth at Isamu and his conversation card)))
[0:34]

13  Kenta  °how about you? How <ABOUT> you?° [0:37]

14  Isamu  how about you? [0:38]
```

```
15  Kenta  i'm::- (.) i'm dog. (1.0) °why?°[0:43]

16  Isamu  why?  [0:44]

17  |((Kenta turns and points to the question cards on the table)) [0:44]

18  Kenta  °why?°[0:45]

19  Kenta  because its cute. (0.5) °とか (to: ka, or) it's  that とか why? とか

(0.2)  聞いてみて (kiite mite., try

to ask) (0.5) whats:: (0.2) why とか tell me more とか (0.1) tell me more 言って

みて (itte mite, try to say)° [1:00]

20  Isamu  tell me more. [1:01]

21  Kenta  dogs iz the not fly bU::t iz not fly the (bU::T) its supa:: spa-

supa:: supa:: SPEed. its run. [1:21]
```

In line 15, Kenta quickly prompts Isamu to ask why Kenta likes dogs. Isamu understands that Kenta is trying to prompt him to ask the question and repeats it, thus leading Kenta to answer it successfully in line 19. However, Kenta wastes no time as he quickly advises what questions Isamu should ask (line 19). This leads Isamu to pick "tell me more" in line 20. This interaction illustrates that because Taichi thinks he is a professional at the speaking tests and has experience with how these tests are conducted, he offers Isamu, who has never taken a speaking test before, some assistance by suggesting a possible question in line 15 and an array of questions in line 19. Kenta tries to be the teacher by instructing Isamu on how to carry out this conversation.

Not all of the pair interactions had positive experiences. The excerpt below shows Taiki (who has an average level of English ability) trying to guide Kisora (who has a higher level of English ability) a little bit too forcefully in this conversation:

```
09  |(((Taiki points to the top part of his iPad and looks at Kisora)))

10  Taiki  聞いて (°kiite. °, ask) (2.0) why= [1:14]
```

```
11  Kisora  why: do: you like- (2.0) to:; wear in the season? [1:21]

12  Taiki   white shirts. (.) °white shirts.°[1:26]

13  Kisora  why?= [1;27]

14  Taiki   =because its (.) cool. [1:30]
```

Taiki manages the conversation in this short interaction by controlling how the turn should be taken. In Line 10, Taiki says, "聞いて (°kiite. °, ask) (2.0) why=" to direct Kisora to ask this question. Kisora asks the question in line 10, and Taiki answers in line 11. However, his directness and hastily prompting Kisora to ask him the questions by instructing her to ask specific questions causes Kisora to be uneasy since she believes she has good English ability. This interaction in July led Kisora to use fewer CSs and caused her to rate herself lower in rejoinders in her video reflection sheet.

The five focus students strongly agreed that participating in group and pair activities has increased their confidence in speaking English. When asked about the usefulness of these activities in learning and using English, Mamoru noted in the March 2025 survey that they serve as a bridge. Kisora mentioned, "hito ni hanasu toki, kinchou nado shinai tame da to omoimasu" (I think these activities help so that I do not get nervous when talking to people.). In the January 2025 survey, both Kenta and Mamoru expressed their appreciation for the advice and support they receive from friends during these activities. A non-focus student also shared in the January 2025 survey, "Minna to eigo de manabinagara ohanashi dekiru. Naze nara eigo ga nigate demo, minna de tasuke atte eigo de tanoshiku kaiwa dekiru kara," (I can talk with everyone while learning in English. Even if I am not good at English, we can help each other and enjoy conversing in English). Another non-focus student mentioned in the January 2025 survey that participating in group and pair activities has increased their confidence in speaking English. They stated,"shourai shiranai na hito de mo kaiwa dekiru kara" (Because I will be able to have

conversations with people I don't know in the future). Overall, students in the class expressed high satisfaction with group and pair work, noting that each student teaches others aspects of English that they may not know, provides advice to help improve one another's English abilities, and prepares themselves for future conversations with others.

During his interview in June, Mamoru expressed that he was unhappy with pair/group activities as he needed to improve his English and couldn't participate effectively. He also felt inferior to his pair activities partner, Setsuna, because he perceived Setsuna's English ability to be excellent. However, Mamoru has recognized that Setsuna has helped with various English-speaking activities and wants her to continue to assist him. He also mentioned in one of his Action Logs that it would be helpful if the teacher and partners could explain things in both English and Japanese so he could better understand the meaning.

```
01  Riri   Akihiko [5:15]

02  Kanon  ええと (eeto, umm) Akihiko [5:17]

03  Akihiko  >why yogi::bo:::?< 多分 (tabun?, maybe) [5:20]

04  Kanon  because yogibo is soft and yogibo sit down and reading a
book.= [5;28]

05  Akihiko  はい (=ha:::i, yes) [5:28]

06  Mamoru  and relax. [5:31]

07  Kanon  Sota. [5:33]

08  Sota  why long- [5:34]

09  Kanon 何 (na:ni?, what>) [3:35]
```

In the transcription above, one student, Kanon, took on the role of reporter during the activity Team-2-Team and shared the top three things that her group felt were important to include in their dream room. However, Kanon was not the only one able to express their opinions or those of the group. In line 04, Kanon explained why the group chose a yogibo as an important

item, stating, " because yogibo is soft and yogibo sit down and reading a book.".

In response, Mamoru added to her explanation in line 06 by saying, " and relax.." This

addition is seen as a spontaneous contribution, as Mamoru introduced it into the conversation

without prior thought. This transcription illustrates how groups collaborate to articulate their

reasoning for selecting certain items.

```
20  Tsuyoshi  bookshelf. [6:43]

21  Tsuyoshi  | bookshelf. [6:47]

22  Kanon     | because snack is hungry iz in. [6:52]

23  Tsuyoshi  snack is hungry (be)- [6:56]

24  Kanon  Mi::o:ri:: questions がある (questions ga aru, do you have

any questions?) [6:57]

25  Mamoru  >QUESTIONS PLEASE< [7:00]

26  Tsuyoshi  I think bookshelf= [7:05]

27  Akihiko  何 (=na:NI?=, what?) [7:05]

28  Tsuyoshi  =>bookshelf< [7:06]

29  Kanon  because put book. [7:10]

30  Akihiko  ああ (a::, ok) [7:11]
```

In the transcription of a conversation during the activity Team-2-Team, Kanon serves as

the reporter explaining to another group why snacks were considered essential for their dream

room, placing it among the top three items on their list. Kanon attempts to encourage questions

from a member of the other group named Miori. However, Mamoru, acting as the group leader

designated by the teacher, loudly interrupts to ask if there are any other questions in line 25.

Then, Tsuyoshi, who is also in the same group, introduces another item from their top three list

in line 28. In line 29, Kanon explains the need for a bookshelf, simply stating, " because put

`book`." These three group members collaborated effectively to continue the discussion and assist Kanon in presenting their ideas for the ideal dream room.

Discussion

Regarding Research Question #1

This year, students appear to be satisfied with how conversation skills positively enhance their ability to speak English and engage in longer conversations with their friends. Most students have effectively used rejoinders and follow-up questions. The two most common follow-up questions were "Why?" and "Tell me more." It makes sense that kids naturally ask "Why?" as they satisfy their curiosity and explore the world around them. During speaking tests, I noticed that students often used "Tell me more" when they wanted to continue a conversation but didn't know what question to ask next. Half the students could use shadowing effectively while the other half couldn't in the February speaking test, so it a CSs that students would still need to work on if they continue to learn CSs in grade three. Later in the year, I introduced clarification requests, repetition of questions, and fillers, as I observed students struggling and experiencing communication breakdowns during speaking tests. Introducing these techniques, especially the repetition of questions, significantly helped students communicate more effectively with their partners in English.

Introducing a speaking test rubric at the beginning of Quarter 3 in October made it easier to identify each student's needs and to teach communication skills in the upcoming unit. Although it required significant effort to grade and provide feedback for each student's speaking test performance, the students appreciated the input. One student even thanked me for my advice in a survey and applied it to their subsequent speaking test. Additionally, giving feedback

increased students' awareness of what was expected on the test, which ultimately led to improved performance and higher test scores. This rubric helped both me and the students understand that learning should be viewed as a formative process rather than just a summative assessment. As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) noted, it allows for "pit stops" along the way to check each student's progress and revisit communication skills that they may not have fully grasped. This approach marks a shift away from traditional English education in Japan, where teachers typically rely more on summative assessments.

One of the challenges I encountered while researching this question was whether students could effectively use CSs during group or pair activities. Although students demonstrated their ability to use rejoinders, openers/closers, and follow-up questions effectively—meaning they utilized these strategies at least two times or more—during the February speaking test, only ten percent of the students could do so naturally, without relying on a script or visual prompts. I observed that when one student led the morning meetings, they utilized shadowing and rejoinders after classmates answered questions during the whole-class discussion that followed the group discussions. However, I did not notice any use of CSs during group activities like Team-2-Team, Mix-Pair-Share, or Mind Mapping when there were no visual prompts such as posters or text on the monitor to encourage the use of CSs. In contrast, CSs were more prevalent in CLT activities like interviews, small talk, or information-gap tasks where prompts were provided through text on the screen or by posters. In this study, CSs and group/pair activities are considered separate entities rather than being combined.

Throughout this study, I questioned whether students truly understood the importance of learning English through my approach, which incorporates CSs and CLT in the classroom. Junko Matsuzaki Carreira (2006) explored motivation among Japanese elementary school children in

English classes. They found that there were developmental declines in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), influenced by various context-specific factors. The study highlighted the lack of research on motivation in second-language classrooms, particularly for EFL elementary school students in Japan. Given that typical EFL education in Japan—especially at my workplace—aims to be fun and engage students with English through repetition drills and games, it raises the question of whether students as young as seven or eight years old are mature enough to grasp the reasons for learning English through CLT or CSs. Furthermore, considering the strong arguments surrounding the Critical Period Theory, the teaching of communication skills to young EFL students becomes a compelling topic for future research. This could help us understand what students perceive as the goals and activities of an EFL classroom that utilizes CLT.

If I were to continue this research in the next school year, I would record more group activities with varied objectives to determine if students are genuinely using CSs during these activities. Given that real-time observation with twenty-eight students is not feasible, I would also consider how to better provide comprehensive input regarding CSs so that students can produce these strategies naturally in group or pair activities, without relying on visual or written cues.

Regarding Research Questions #2

The five focal students responded positively to receiving help from their peers. Kenta expressed gratitude for the assistance he received from his table partner, Hikaru, which helped improve their conversations and reduce awkward silences during the June interview. In the first six months of the school year, Kenta supported classmates with lower English proficiency and those who had not learned CSs the previous year. When helping others, Kenta adjusted his

language to match his partner's level and occasionally used Japanese to enhance their English skills. He also guided his partners during conversations by offering question options or using Japanese for instruction and confirmation.

In the article titled "A Child's Development of Interactional Competence in a Swedish L2 Classroom," Cekaite (2007) proposed three stages of a child's L2 interactional competence: an early phase (dyadic exchange), a middle phase (interactionally inappropriate self-selections), and a late stage (participating as a competent community member). Based on Cekaite's findings and my observations from class and speaking tests, Mamoru appears to be in the early phase, while Kisora, Aoto, and Kenta are in the middle phase, and Sumire is at the end of the middle phase, approaching the late stage. Mamoru tends to remain silent during conversations, preferring one-on-one interactions over group discussions. Kisora and Kenta are both in the middle phase of interaction, with Kenta being more active, playful, and sometimes socially awkward. Kisora waits for her turn to speak, while Kenta often tries to jump into conversations.

It is important to note Cekaite's statement that "one can position differently depending in part on his or her interactional skills" (p. 59). This suggests that a child's L2 interactional development should be viewed as different trajectories linked to diverse interaction and language-learning experiences over time. Reflecting on classroom observations and the transcript, Kenta's role in the classroom shifts depending on the person or interaction. In the transcript, Kenta appears as a skilled student guiding his friend with lower English ability, but classroom observations suggest that he may need guidance when interacting with someone who has higher English competence. This demonstrates that activity roles can change based on the specific context, interaction, or person involved.

However, we must also consider the maturity of these children, as some may not be mature enough to participate fully in group or pair activities. Kenta was a strong leader in the first six months of school; he led conversations, stayed on task, attempted to use English when possible, and helped his friends, especially those with lower English abilities. However, from October to February, he became more playful, spoke mostly in Japanese, struggled to fulfill his role during group activities, was often off-task, and rarely assisted others. He transitioned from being a leader to someone who needed help.

From late February to March, Kenta began to regain his leadership role. He contributed more during group activities and took responsibility as the speaker during the Team-2-Team presentation activity. The reasons for his drastic change in motivation or learning style remain unclear, as it was challenging to elicit detailed responses from him during interviews; he would typically respond with "I don't know," or simply say "yes" or "no." Additionally, as he transitioned to another school, I am unable to assess his progress as an EFL learner in grade three.

Conclusion

I focused on five students whom I taught for sixteen months as part of my research. It's important to note that the experiences and opinions of these five students may not represent the entire class, as each student has unique experiences. However, they provide a relatively comprehensive view of their language learning development, particularly with the inclusion of one outlier. It is worth mentioning that most of the students in my second-grade class were not taught communication strategies (CSs), given a speaking test, or asked for reflections last year. Consequently, I had to start from scratch with the first CSs and ask fundamental questions about

their opinions on using CSs, their group cohesion, and their completion of communicative tasks in class. They had been working in competitive, individualistic learning environments that focused on repetitive drills and games or worksheets rather than collaborative and cooperative activities, which required them to work together to complete tasks while learning in the process. I also learned how to make the EFL classroom more of a formative learning experience, emphasizing skill development over knowledge acquisition, rather than a summative approach. Learning a language is a lifelong experience that does not have clear endpoints but rather involves check-in points to assess student progress. I plan to implement similar practices based on what I learned from this research with my students next year.

References

Apple, M. (2006). L*anguage learning theories and cooperative learning techniques in the EFL classroom* (Doctoral dissertation, Doshisha University).

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (3rd Edition). Pearson Education, Inc.

Brown, H. D., and Lee, H. (2015). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (5th Edition). Pearson Education, Inc.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1*, 1-47.

Carreira, J. M. (2006). Motivation for learning English as a foreign language in Japanese elementary schools. *JALT Journal*, *28*(2), 135.

Cekaite, A. (2007). A child's development of interactional competence in a Swedish L2 classroom. *The Modern Language Journa*l, *91*(1), 45-62.

Corder, S. P. (1981). *Error analysis and interlanguage*. Oxford University Press.

Dörnyei, Z., and Murphey, T. (2004). *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and Researching Motivation* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Kagan, S. & Kagan, M. (2009). *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. Kagan Publishing.

Kindt, D. *Prof. Kindt's Website*, www.profkindt.com/site/efl_home.html. Accessed 16 Aug. 2023.

Laurier, J. (2013). Cooperative Learning as a meaning way to implement communicative EFL lessons, *The Journal of Saitama City Educators*, *3*(3), 5-7.

Guk, I., & Kellogg, D. (2007). The ZPD and whole class teaching: Teacher-led and student-led interactional mediation of tasks. *Language Teaching Research*, *11*(3), 281–299.

Kenny, T., & Woo, L. (2013). Nice Talking With You Level 1 (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Hinkel, E. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching the four skills. *TESOL Quarterly, 40,* 109-131.

Hymes, D. (1972). O*n Communicative Competence.* In J. Pride, & J. Holmes (Eds.), Sociolinguistics (pp. 269-285). Penguin Books.

Jacobs, G., Power, M., & Loh, W. (2002). *The teacher's sourcebook for cooperative learning*. Corwin Press.

Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T., & Holubec, E.J. (1994). *Cooperative learning in the classroom*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum.

Kehe, D., & Kehe, P. D. (2022). *Conversation strategies: Pair and group activities for developing communicative competence*. Pro Lingua Associates.]

Lee, J. F., & VanPatten, B. (2003). *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen.* McGraw Hill.

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2022). *How languages are learned*. Oxford University Press.

Long, M. H., & Porter, P. A. (1985). Group work, interlanguage talk, and Second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, *19*(2), 207.

Murphey, T. & Arao, H. (2001). Reported belief changes through near-peer role modeling. *TESL-EJ*, *5*(3)

Olsen, R.E. W-B & Kagan, S. (1992). About cooperative learning. In C. Kessler (Ed.). *Cooperative learning: a teacher 's resource book* (pp. 1-30). Prentice Hall.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). A*pproaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Ridge, Elaine (2014). "Communicative language teaching: Time for review?". *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus*. 21.

Savignon, S. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice*. Addyson-Wesley.

Savignon, S. (2002). I*nterpreting Communicative Language Learning: Contexts and Concerns in Teaching Education.* Yale University Press.

Swan, M. (1985). "A critical look at the Communicative Approach (1)". *ELT Journa*l. *39*(2): 2–12.

Swan, M. (1985). "A critical look at the Communicative Approach (2)". *ELT Journal*. *39*(2): 76–87.

Wallace, S. (2017) Developing university students' oral-Communication ability in the EFL classroom with conversation strategies. *Journal of the School of Contemporary*

International Studies. Nagoya University of Foreign Studies.

Walsh, S. (2011). *Exploring classroom discourse: Language in action*. Routledge.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems Thinker*, *9*(5).

Wenger-Trayner, E., & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2023, October). *Introduction to communities of Practice*. Wenger-Trayner. https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/

Wood, J. (2011). Communicative language teaching (CLT) and communication strategies (CSs): theory and practice. *Journal of the School of Contemporary International Studies. Nagoya University of Foreign Studies*.

Appendix

Appendix 1-A

What I Like to Do

Look at the pictures and write the names of the instruments.

jump rope	play tag	play dodgeball	rollerblade
play basketball	fly a kite	play soccer	watch a game
swim	skateboard	ride a bike	play catch

Listen and Circle

Listen to the teacher and circle the right word.

1. I like / do not like to play soccer.

2. I like / do not like to watch a baseball game.

3. I like / do not like to play tag.

4. I like / do not like to play dodgeball with my friends.

5. I like / do not like to play basketball in the gym. I play outside.

6. I like / do not know how to rollerblade. I have never tried it.

7. I like / do not like to play jump rope outside.

8. I like / do not like to play catch..

9. I like / do not like to ride a bike.

10. I do not like / do not know how to skateboard. But, I want to try!

How About You?

Write three (or more) sentences about what you like or not like to do.

Example: I like to watch a baseball game.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

⭐ 4. _____

⭐ 5. _____

Name: _____   🎤 Interview Time!

A: Hello, _____.
B: Hello, _____.
A: What do you have in your dream house? A sofa? A bed? A TV?
B: Hmm, let me see... I have a _____ / _____ s in my dream room.
A: A _____ / _____ s? Oh, I see! / That's great! / Me too. **What?** / Who? / Where? / **When?** / Why? / How? / **Tell me more!**
B: _____. How about you? What do you have in your dream house? Books? games? posters?
A: Well...... I have a _____ / _____ s in my dream room.
B: A _____ / _____ s? Oh, I see! / That's great! / Me too. **What?** / Who? / Where? / **When?** / Why? / How? / **Tell me more!**
A: _____. Look at the time. It is time to go! See you!
B: See you later!

	Name	Thing in their dream house	What? / Who? / When? / Where? / Why? / How? / Tell Me More
Friend #1			
Friend #2			
Friend #3			

A: Hello, _____.

B: Hello, _____.

A: How are you?

B: I'm _____. How about you?

A: I'm _____. What are they doing? Are they jumping? Singing? Playing soccer?

B: He / She is _____ing.

A: _____ing? Oh, I see. / Great!/ Me too!

Why? / Where? / Who?/ What? / When? / Tell me more!

B: _____. What are they doing? Are they jumping? Singing? Playing soccer?

A: Well, let me see... He / She is _____ing.

B: _____ing? Oh, I see. / Great/ Me too!

Why? / Where? / Who?/ What? / When? Tell me more!

A: _____. Oh, it's time to go! See you later!

B: See you!

Appendix 1-B

Leader

English Monitor

Writer

Reporter

What to Do: • Fixes problems
- Tells others to try.
- Help others to keep working.

What to Say:
- "What is wrong?"
- "Your turn" • "Please (do this)"

What to Do:
- Makes sure English is used.
- Make sure everyone can do the activity in English.

What to Say: • "English please!"
- "What is that in English?"
- "_____ is _____ in English."

What to Do:
- writes on worksheet/paper.
- write down ideas

What to Say:
- "One more time please.
- "How do you spell that?"

What to Do:
- says what they saw
- shares group ideas to class

What to Say:
- "Number (One) is..."
- "It is..."   • "We wrote..."
- "We think.."

Time Keeper

What to Do:
- Keeps track of time
- Tells the team how much time is left

What to Say:
- "We have ___ minutes left."
- "Let's hurry up."

Video Project Jobs

Write Step Chart: _____

Make Origami: _____

Record Video: _____

Record Audio: _____

Make the Video Good: _____

Appendix 1-C

① Draw	② Draw	③ Draw	④ Draw	⑤ Draw
What actvity?	What actvity?	What actvity?	What actvity?	What actvity?
Why?	Why?	Why?	Why?	Why?
Where?	Where?	Where?	Where?	Where?
What School Item?	What School Item?	What School Item?	What School Item?	What School Item?

Appendix 1-D

Appendix 1-E

Opener
- Hello, _____!
- Hey, _____!
- Good morning/afternoon!

Closer
- See you!/See you later!
- Good bye!
- Bye!

Rejoinders
- That's cool/good!
- I don't like that.
- Me too!
- Oh, I see.

A: My favorite food is apples.

B: Apples? That is cool!

Shadowing

- One more time please.
- Pardon?
- What did you say?
- Did you say ~~~?

One More Time Please!

Questions!

Tell Me More! Can? Do?

Hint Please

A: What kind of fruits do you like? Apples?

Lemons? Oranges? Pineapple?

B: I like apples!

Fillers

- Let me see...
- Hmm....
- Well...
- Okay, so...

Appendix 2

Appendix 2-A

Name: _____

What number did you pick? _____

Why?_____

_____

Please make a goal for next Speaking Test

_____

_____

What do you think you did the best on during the Speaking Activity ?

1 eye contact

2 smile

3 volume

4 speaking

5 Openers and Closers

6 rejoinders

7 shadowing

8 making questions

helping others

Why?

Because I used a lot of _____. (rejoinders, shadowing)

Because I spoke a lot.

Because I was able to _____. (look at my friend, smile, shadow)

Because I was able to help my friend. / Because I was able to help others.

Because I was able to use a big voice.

Because I asked a lot of questions. / Because I was able to make a lot of questions.

Next Speaking Activity, I Want to…

I want to use more _____. (rejoinders, shadowing)

I want to speak more.

I want to _____ more. (look at my friend, smile, shadow)

I want to help my friend more. / I want to help others more.

I want to use a bigger voice. / I want to use a louder voice.

I want to ask more questions. / Because I want to make more questions.

Name: _____ スピーキングアクティビティのゴールふりかえり

1. I can doe help others morすることができます。

とても
できた

あまり
できなかった

2. どうしてそう思うのですか?

_____

_____

Appendix 2-B

Name: _____

English Speaking Rubric (February 2025)

	S 🤩	A 😃	B 😐	C 🤔
Eye Contact / Volume	☐ Can look at their friend all the time. ☐ Uses a great voice volume. Can hear all that is being said. **(4 points)**	☐ Can look at their friend most of the time. ☐ Good volume. Can hear most of what is being said. **(3 points)**	☐ Can look at their friend half the time. ☐ Uses an ok voice volume. Can sometimes hear what is being said. **(2 points)**	☐ Look at their friends a little. ☐ Uses a small voice volume. Cannot hear what is being said. **(1 point)**
How Well I Can Speak	☐ Can speak for two (2) minutes with no pauses. **(4 points)**	☐ Can speak for two (2) minutes with a few pauses. **(3 points)**	☐ Can speak for two (2) minutes with many pauses. ☐ Half of the speaking is silence. **(2 points)**	☐ Can say at least one (1) word for two (2) minutes. ☐ Most of the speaking is with silence. **(1 point)**
Speaking Content	☐ Can talk about four (4) or more things about their favorite McDonalds menu item. **(8 points)**	☐ Can talk about three (3) things about their favorite McDonalds menu item. **(6 points)**	☐ Can talk about two (2) things about their favorite McDonalds menu item.. **(4 points)**	☐ Can talk about one (1) thing about their favorite McDonalds menu item.. **(2 points)**

Rejoinders Openers and Closers Making Questions Fillers	☐ Can use rejoiners perfectly. ☐ Can use an opener and a closer. ☐ Can ask four (4) or more questions. ☐ Can use fillers when it is okay. **(6 points)**	☐ Can use rejoiners most of the time. ☐ Can use an opener and a closer. ☐ Can ask three (3) questions. ☐ Can use fillers when it is okay. **(4 points)**	☐ Can use rejoiners sometimes. ☐ Can use an opener or a closer. ☐ Can ask two (2) questions. ☐ Can use fillers when it is okay. **(2 points)**	☐ Did not use rejoiners. ☐ Did not use an opener nor a closer. ☐ Can ask one (1) question. ☐ Cannot use fillers when it is okay. **(1 point)**
Shadowing	☐ Can use shadowing all the time. **(3 points)**	☐ Can use shadowing most of the time. **(2 points)**	☐ Can use shadowing sometimes. **(1 point)**	☐ Did not use shadowing. **(0 points)**
Hints Please	☐ Can give hints three (3) or more times. **(3 points)**	☐ Can give hints two (2) times. **(2 points)**	☐ Can give hints one (1) time. **(1 point)**	☐ Can not give any hints. **(0 points)**
Helping Each Other Understand	☐ Can understand and explain what they mean ☐ Asks for help ☐ Tries to fix mistakes by saying it again or using simple words. **(3 points)**	☐ Can understand some words or things. ☐ Ask for help ☐ Tries to explain in a simple way. ☐ Tries to fix mistakes on their own. **(2 points)**	☐ Can understand a little ☐ Ask for help ☐ Tries to explain ☐ Tries to fix mistakes with help. **(1 point)**	☐ Cannot understand ☐ Does not ask for help ☐ Does not fix mistakes. **(0 points)**

Total: _____ / 31 (   )

_____

Appendix 3

Lesson 1

Objectives:

● The students can interview their friends to see what kind of clothes they like to wear in the summer

Time	Interaction	Action & Procedure
3 mins	T-Ss	**(1) General Announcements**
5 mins	S-Ss	**(2) Show and Tell** One student will come up and talk about their favorite thing via their iPad. Other students will ask questions to find out more information.

10 mins		**(3) Fun Video and Discussion**
		The student watch two videos from *Sesame*
(3 mins)	S-S	*Street* and *Nature Cat*. And they will
		discuss two questions that was asked in the
(6 mins)	O	videos (related to summer) using CSs.
5 mins	O	**(4) "Fashion Show" Song**
17 mins		**(5) Interview: "What do you like to wear in the summer?"**
(2 mins)	O	(a) Listen to the two students' recordings again
(5 mins)	T-Ss	(b) Explain the activity and model
(10 mins)	S-S	(c) Do the activity
5 mins	S	**(6) Action Log**

Total Times

T-Ss: 8 minutes

S-S: 13 minutes

S-Ss: 5 minutes

S: 5 minutes

O: 13 minutes

Lesson 2

Objectives:

● The students will present to another group about which are the top three (out of ten) most important things that is needed in a dream room that was discussed in their group.

Time	Interaction	Action & Procedure
3 mins	T-Ss	**(1) General Announcements**
12 mins	S-Ss	**(2) Show and Tell** One student will come up and talk about their favorite thing via their iPad. Then, one student representative from each group will come to the teacher and pick one Question card at random. Then, each group has one minute to up with one question for the presenter. Then the presenter will pick each group, one by one, to be asked a question and answer it.

30 mins
 	
(7 mins)
 	
(3 mins)
	
	T-S
	
	O
		(3) Team-2-Team Presentation
		One group will present to another group their top three (out of ten) most important things that is needed in a dream room. They will tell the item and then will tell the reason why they picked it. Then, the other group members will have a chance to ask questions.
		        (a) Explanation of the activity
		
		        (b) Students will move to the one group and/or get ready

(4 mins)	S-Ss	**(c)** The speaker from Group 1 will present about their top 3 items.
(3 mins) (3 mins)	Ss-Ss O	**(d)** Question Time **(e)** Students will move to the other group and/or get ready
(4 mins)	S-Ss	**(f)** The speaker from Group 1 will present about their top 3 items. (**g)** Question Time
(3 mins)	Ss-Ss	
(3 mins)	T-Ss	Clean up/Reflection

Total Times

T-Ss: 13 minutes

S-Ss: 20 minutes

Ss-Ss: 6 minutes

O: 6 minutes

Appendix 4

Appendix 4-A

March 2025 Survey

1. What do you think about English class?

 1 = I love it.

 4 = I do not like it.

2. What is the most enjoyable part(s) of the class for you? Please say why.

3. What is the most difficult part(s) of the class for you? Please say why.

4. I think group and pair activities are...

1 = Very useful.

4 = Not very useful.

5. ow do you feel about receiving help from your classmates?

1 = It is very good.

4 = It is very bad.

6. I actively participate in group and pair activities.

1 = I think so very much.

4 = I do not think so very much.

7. Group and pair activities are useful for learning English.

1 = I think so very much.

4 = I do not think so very much.

8. How are group and pair activities useful when learning and using English?

9. Working in group/pair activities has made me confident in speaking English.

1 = I think so very much.

4 = I do not think so very much.

10. Working in group/pair activities has made me confident speaking English.

1 = I think so.

4 = I do not think so.

11. Group and pair activities motivate to learn and use English.

1 = I think so.

4 = I do not think so.

12. How can you get motivated through group activities?

13. Group and activities help me to know my classmates better.

1 = I think so very much.

4 = I do not think so very much.

14. Conversation strategies help me say what I want in English. What do you think about this?

1 = I think so very much.

4 = I do not think so very much.

15. I can use Communication Strategies (Openers, Closers, Rejoinders, Shadowing, Questions, Fillers) often in my English conversations.

1 = I think so.

4 = I do not think so.

16. I can use:

Openers

Closers

Rejoinders

Shadowing

Questions

Fillers

None

17. I can use the conversation skills I learned in class to speak to someone in English.

1 = I think so.

4 = I do not think so.

18. I'm confident that I can communicate easily in English using the conversation skills I learned.

1 = I think so.

4 = I do not think so.

19. I learn better with:

Someone who has better English than me.

Someone who has the same English level as me.

Someone who has worse English than me.

20. How do you think your speaking has improved since April 2023 when you were a first grader?

21. How do you feel about understanding the directions and the content in English class? Please pick one.

I understand everything that the teacher says in English. (100%)

I understand most of what the teacher says in English. (75%)

I understand half of what the teacher says in English. (50%)

I understand a little of what the teacher says in English. (30%)

I don't understand what the teacher says in English. (0%)

22. Is there anything you wanted Ms. Amy to do more or less?

23. Please write a message to Ms. Amy.

Appendix 4-B

Questions for the February 2025 Post-Test Survey

1. How well do you think you did on the speaking test?

4 = I did really well.

1 = I did really badly.

2. What was fun about the speaking test? Not fun?

3. Do you think you can have a conversation in English for 2 minutes?

4 = I can do it very well!

1 = I can't do it very well.

4. When I didn't understand, I spoke English in another way.

  4 = I did really well.

  1 = I did really badly.

5. I could converse with my partner because I used shadowing.

  4 = I think so very much.

  1 = I don't think so very much.

6. I listened when my partner talked.

  4 = I think so very much.

  1 = I don't think so very much.

7. I can say what I want to say when I use conversation strategies (openers, closers, rejoinders, shadowing, follow-up questions).

  4 = I think so very much.

  1 = I don't think so very much.

8. Choose one: S, A, B. Why did you choose this?

9. Please write any questions or thoughts.

Appendix 4-C

December Interview Questions to Focus Students

To Kenta:

1. What do you think about working with a partner or group?

2. Why did you say, I think, very much when asked if group and pair activities motivate you to

learn and use English on the October survey?

3. Can you tell me about your experience with pair work activities with someone whose English level is higher than yours? What impact does this have on your English skills?

4. Let's look at the speaking test from last Tuesday. (Look at the video.) What do you think about your performance? Were you able to speak clearly? Could you talk with your friend for two minutes? Did you use good conversation strategies?

5. You gave yourself a B for "How Well I Speak" on the speaking test reflection. Why did you give yourself that grade?

6. Conversation strategies help me say what I want to say in English. What do you think about this?

7. Which strategies are the most useful for you? Please say why.

8. When asked, "I can use the conversation skills I learned in class to speak to someone in English," you said, "I do not think so." Why?

9. When asked "I am confident that I can communicate easily in English using the conversation that I learned.", you said "I do not think so". Why?"

10. How do you think your speaking has improved since April 2023 when you were a first grader?

To Kisora

1. What do you think about working with a partner or group?

2. Why did you say, I think, very much when asked if group and pair activities motivate you to learn and use English on the October survey?

3. Can you tell me about your experience with pair work activities with someone whose English level is higher than yours? What impact does this have on your English skills?

4. In October`s survey, you said, "I learn better with Someone who has the same level of English as me." Do you think the same now? Or different? Why do you think so?

5. Let's look at the speaking test from last Tuesday. (Look at the video.) What do you think about your performance? Were you able to speak clearly? Could you talk with your friend for two minutes? Did you use good conversation strategies?

6. You gave yourself a B for "Hints Please" on the speaking test reflection. Why did you give yourself that grade?

7. Let's watch this speaking test from September. (Look at the video.) What do you think about it? How are you different now compared to the test in December?

8. Communication strategies (openers, closers, rejoinders, shadowing, questions, and fillers) often help me have better and more extended conversations with others.

9. Conversation strategies help me say what I want to say in English. What do you think about this?

10. Which strategies are the most useful for you? Please say why.

11. When asked "I am confident that I can communicate easily in English using the conversation that I learned, you said "I do not say yes. I do not say no". Why?"

12. How do you think your speaking has improved since April 2023 when you were a first grader?

To Mamoru:

1. You said in October's survey that you liked it a little when asked "What do you think about partner and group speaking activities in class?" Why?

2. Working in group/pair activities has made me confident in speaking English," What do you think? Please tell me why.

3. When asked "I actively participate in group and pair activities. ", you said "I do not say yes, I do not say no". Why?

4. In October's survey, you said, "I learn better with someone who speaks the same English as me." Do you think the same now? Or is it different? Can you improve your English when working with someone who speaks better English than you?

5. Let's look at the speaking test from last Tuesday. (Look at the video.) What do you think about your performance? Were you able to speak clearly? Could you talk with your friend for two minutes? Did you use good conversation strategies?

6. On the test survey from Tuesday, I can only do a little when asked "When I didn't understand, I made my own English and fixed it.". Why?

7. Communication strategies (openers, closers, rejoinders, shadowing, questions, and fillers) often help me have better and longer conversations with others.

8. Conversation strategies help me say what I want to say in English. What do you think about this?

9. Which strategies are the most useful for you? Please say why.

10. When asked, "I can use the conversation skills I learned in class to speak to someone in English," you said, "I do not say yes, I do not say no." Why?

11. When asked *I am confident "at I can communicate easily in English using the conversation that I learned", you said "I do not say yes, I do not say no.". Why?"

12. How do you think your speaking has improved since April 2023 when you were a first grader?

13. How can you speak more English with friends?

To Tsuyoshi:

1. What do you think about working with a partner or group?

2. Can you tell me about your experience with pair work activities with someone whose English level is higher than yours? What impact does this have on your English skills?

3. On the October survey, you said "I speak because I don't understand much English." when asked "What is the most difficult part(s) of the class for you?". For example?

4. In October's survey, you said, "I learn better with someone who speaks the same English as me." Do you think the same now? Or is it different? Can you improve your English when working with someone who speaks better English than you?

5. Let's look at the speaking test from last Tuesday. (Look at the video.) What do you think about your performance? Were you able to speak clearly? Could you talk with your friend for two minutes? Did you use good conversation strategies?

6. On the test survey from Tuesday, I could not do it when asked "When I didn't understand, I made my own English and fixed it.". Why?

7. You gave yourself a C for "Speaking Content" on the speaking test reflection. Why did you give yourself that grade?

8. Communication strategies (openers, closers, rejoinders, shadowing, questions, and fillers) often help me have better and longer conversations with others.

9. Conversation strategies help me say what I want to say in English. What do you think about this?

10. Which strategies are the most useful for you? Please say why.

11. When asked, "I can use the conversation skills I learned in class to speak to someone in English," you said, "I do not think so." Why?

12. You were in Ms. Courtney's class last year. Last year, Kisora, Mamoru, and Kenta were in

Ms. Amy's class. How did Kisora, Mamoru, and Kenta help you learn to use conversation strategies? How about working together in pairs and groups? Did you learn anything else about English from them?

To Sumire:

1. What do you think about working with a partner or group?

2. Can you tell me about your experience with pair work activities with someone whose English level is higher than yours? What impact does this have on your English skills?

3. In the October survey, you said "It is writing sentences. This is because there are some words I don't understand in English." when asked "What is the most difficult part(s) of the class for you?". Why?

4. In October`s survey, you said, "I learn better with Someone who has the same level of English as me." Do you think the same now? Or different? Why do you think so?

5. Let's look at the speaking test from last Tuesday. (Look at the video.) What do you think about your performance? Were you able to speak clearly? Could you talk with your friend for two minutes? Did you use good conversation strategies?

6. You gave yourself a B for "Hints Please" on the speaking test reflection. Why did you give yourself that grade?

7. Communication strategies (openers, closers, rejoinders, shadowing, questions, and fillers) often help me have better and longer conversations with others.

8. Conversation strategies help me say what I want to say in English. What do you think about this?

9. Which strategies are the most useful for you? Please say why.

10. You were in Mr. Kevin's class last year. Last year, Kisora, Mamoru, and Kenta were in Ms. Amy's class. How did Kisora, Mamoru, and Kenta help you learn to use conversation stages? How about working together in pairs and groups? Did you learn anything else about English from them?

11. In the October survey, you said "I want to learn more English." How could we do this in class?