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Active Reading through Pair/Group Work to Develop Oral Skills

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1. Introduction

With the development of world globalization, the importance of oral communication in English has been increasing in Japan. However, the majority of Japanese students studying English still place a great emphasis on reading, especially at senior high schools. This skill seems to be preferred to the other three, because not all of them have the chance to speak English very often. Therefore, it would seem to be a good idea if reading activities in and outside the classroom which are so familiar to students, could be utilized as preparatory steps to speaking.

How can reading lead to speaking? In a conversational scene, there are some who start speaking, but there are also some who speak in response to what they hear. For example, when they are spoken to, they express verbally their agreement or disagreement. Likewise, when they read something, they may also express verbally the ideas which occur to them from the reading. This means that reading materials might be used as stimuli to help readers in speaking English.

The four linguistic skills are said to be related to each other. Bryne(1983), Crystal(1987), and Krashen(1981) are among those who do so. Among these four, listening and reading tend to be regarded as passive skills("passive" means learners develop these skills without conscious effort) and the other two as active("active" means learners must make a conscious effort to acquire them). However, on close examination, listening and reading, because they involve encoding and decoding, seem to be active processes. Many applied linguists agree with this idea, including Byrne(1983), Holme(1991), and Smith(1990). To take the reading process, the understanding of a reading passage is attained when the reader understands not only the meaning of the code but also the writer's message contained in the code. Neither of these can be carried out when the reader is only given information unidirectionally. They require positive mental activities on the part of the reader. It seems, therefore, that the final message the reader reaches is in part a product of his/her encoding in his/her own words of the interpretations s/he elicits from the received information. Thus I would claim that the reader paraphrases, summarizes, infers and interprets while engaged in the process of reading. I assume that these activities might well be closely related to the activities which take place in the process of speaking.

The main aim in this project is to explore some of the common links between reading and

speaking skills and to create a practical method of teaching English based on knowledge of these common links in and outside the classroom. The next chapter analyzes the stages in reading and assumes that there are certain active processes which might be related to those in speaking. The chapter 3 analyzes these processes in speaking. The chapter 4 suggests common links between these two skills, and describes the stimuli which cause these links. The chapter 5 selects a number of examples of articles to support the argument presented in chapter 4 and also suggests the importance of pair/group work in classroom reading activities. The chapter 6 presents practical teaching plans including activities such as paraphrasing, summarizing and inferring, and also suggests ideas for students' continuing activity to connect reading with speaking activities outside classroom activities. (Phonological factors are not discussed here. This research assumes that the reader has already acquired these skills.)

2. The Stages in Reading as an Active Process

Reading requires the reader to be able to distinguish letters of the alphabet, and then to identify words which consist of some of these letters. The process of letter and word identification is carried out through recognition of the alphabet. Reading comprehension may be seen as beginning at this stage or it may be considered to follow the recognition stage.

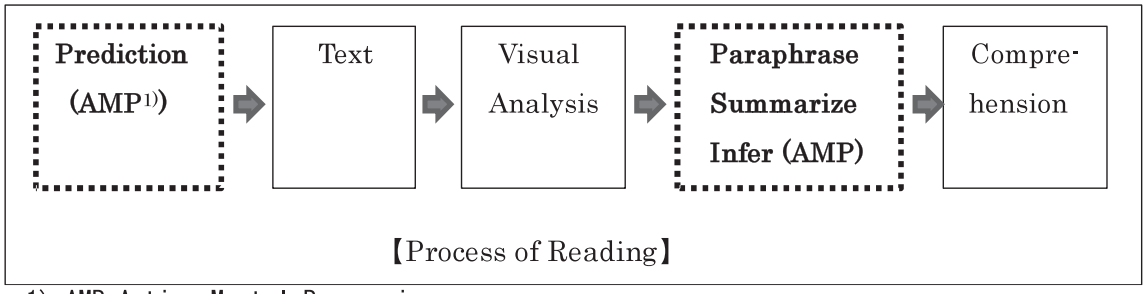
Two theories have been put forward in relation to reading comprehension (Crystal, 1987). One theory suggests that a phonological step is essential and that reading is a serial letter-by-letter process with larger units gradually being accumulated. The other implies that a phonological link is unnecessary, and that words are read as wholes without being divided into a linear sequence of letters and without being enunciated. The examples of people who have been profoundly deaf since birth and who subsequently learn to read, seem to support this theory (Crystal, 1987). This latter view may support the suggestion that Japanese students' acquisition of English can be done through reading by eye alone − without a phonological step.

What is of more concern here is not so much these processes but the process of comprehending the meaning in the text. According to Smith (1990), the following process functions in reading comprehension. The reader reads meaning without reading words. Comprehending meaning is quite different from identifying letters and words. The more concerned with meaning the reader is, the less aware of words s/he is. In other words, when the reader extracts some information from the text, the recognition of individual words is not necessary. Moreover, reading is not a mechanical process to extract all the information but only the information that is the most relevant to the questions the reader has related to the text(Smith, 1990). Similarly, Fries (1963) defines reading as follows: reading is a highly developed activity including various important aspects, such as quick identification of letters and words, clear apprehension of the meaning implied by the writer, reaction to the idea. Furthermore, he maintains reading is an activity of four dimensions; the perception of words, a

clear understanding of meaning, thoughtful reaction and integration. It is also a means of communication related to talking, listening and writing, which complement one another in many ways. He suggests that reading should include all types of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem-solving. He maintains that it is one of the best media for fostering many techniques of thinking and imagining. Smith and Fries seem to assume that this reading process might be a productive skill, rather than a receptive one.

It would seem, therefore, that reading is not a passive activity but a reader-centered active one. Furthermore, as mentioned above, reading is the process of understanding the writer's idea or message. This is also an active process. In addition, before reading, the reader might start using prediction to interpret meaning and, consequently, the reader's active mental processing is also indispensable here. It is my belief that the final stage in reading may be for the reader to paraphrase, summarize, infer and interpret the text in his/her own words through his/her mental activity.

The process might be illustrated with a diagram as follows.



【Process of Reading】

1) AMP=Active Mental Processing

3. Some Processes in Speaking

In a conversational scene, the speaker tries to encode the message to be conveyed in appropriate expressions, while the listener decodes the message s/he needs. Speech sometimes includes ungrammatical utterances or redundant repetitions. On the contrary, written sentences are well organized in a text. In speaking, the message usually contains more information than the listener needs.

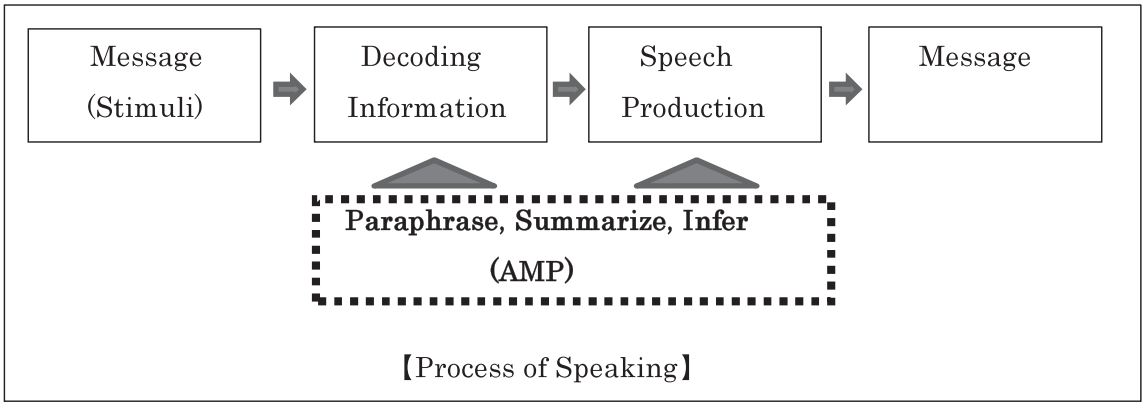
The first stage in speaking is probably the imitation of sounds of letters, words, phrases and sentences of others. Then comes the second stage when speakers express their own ideas. At this stage, there is a range from grammatical inaccuracy to accuracy, from inappropriate to appropriate forms, and from clumsy to fluent utterances. In addition, phonological factors are very important. For example, pronunciation includes three features, that is, vowel and consonant, stress and rhythm, and intonation. Furthermore, body language seems likely to be one of the factors in speaking.

Besides the processes mentioned so far, the influence of external stimuli may be noticed

more in the speaking process. People may take the initiative in speaking in some cases, but they usually speak in response to something they hear. For instance, when they are spoken to, they express verbally their agreement or disagreement. What they hear operates as a stimulus, leading them to think of a response. This suggests that stimuli could be one of the most important factors in generating speech.

The phenomenon of auditory attention indicates that the brain might be able to focus on certain aspects of a complex auditory stimulus and to ignore others(Crystal, 1987). This means that, before speaking, the speaker as the listener might not try to recognize all the messages but to extract only the information s/he needs(It seems difficult to distinguish the speaker from the listener at this stage). Then, the speaker might try to convey his/her message which is the closest to the information the listener needs. In this process, the speaker might also play the same role of the listener while speaking. In other words, the speaker's mental activity might be both passive and productive. The speaker might be supposed to respond to stimuli before and while speaking. It is my assumption that, before and while speaking, the speaker might well attempt to paraphrase and summarize his/her message to be conveyed appropriately, and to infer the information the listener needs.

The process might be summarized in the following way.

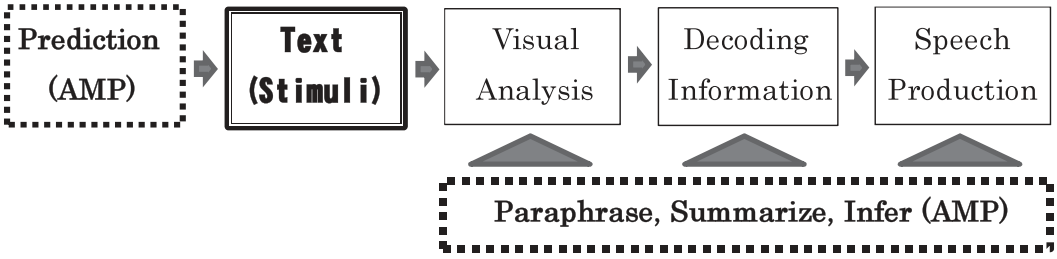


【Process of Speaking】

4. Some Common Links Connecting Reading Process with Speaking Process

In first language acquisition, learning to speak precedes learning to read. What is attempted here is to assume the reverse process; from reading to speaking. As analyzed so far, the reading process is an active one in the decoding stage. Similarly, the speaking process is also an active one. Both diagrams illustrated in Chapter 2 and 3 also indicate that there might be some common links between both stages. It is highly likely that these links might well be active mental processing such as paraphrase, summary and inference. In addition, what is noticed here is that the text operates as a stimulus in the reading process, and the message as a stimulus in the speaking process.

It is my contention that the common links between reading and speaking processes might be active mental activities stemming from the text or the message which act as stimuli. This suggests that knowledge of the common links analyzed here, when the text is used as a stimulus to speech production, might lead to a practical method of teaching English, that is, an approach to developing oral skills. The newly formulated diagram (the process from reading to speaking) might be as follows.



【Process from Reading to Speaking】

5. Examples of Reading through Active Mental Processing

There are a large variety of practical methods for teaching reading by, among others, Harmer (1993), Holme (1992), Papalia (1987), and Tomlinson and Ellis (1988). Among them, several focus on the active mental processes which the reader engages in, such as prediction before reading and paraphrase, summary and inference while reading. Examples of these are shown below.

5.1 Examples of Prediction Tasks

As analyzed in Chapter 2, the good reader extracts only the information s/he needs from the text. When the reader understands the purpose for reading or the content of the passage before the text is read, the text itself is likely to work more as a stimulus, resulting in active mental processing by the reader.

Two types of task for the language classroom which make the reader predict the content of the text are given below.

5.1.1 Headline or Title Expansion

The title of a text usually suggests its topic; so does a headline. The learner may be asked to speak about the content by simply reading the title or headline. The procedure of this activity might be as follows:

(1) Have the students read the title or headline of the text on the board.

(2) Ask the students to associate such a title or headline with the probable content of the text.

(3) Get the students to talk about their ideas in pair/group work.

Instead of a title or headline, a few key words from the text might also be used.

5.1.2 Things You Know/Don't Know/Would Like to Know

This activity is similar to 5.1.1, but is focused on more specific areas of the content of the text. The content used here is usually about matters or places familiar to the reader, such as World War II, New York and so on. The procedure to be followed would be:

(1) Have the students read the name of the subject such as World War II from the board.

(2) Have the students read the following chart on the board.

Things you know	Things you are not sure of	Things you would like to know

(3) Get the students to complete each column in pair/group work.

(4) Write the students' ideas briefly in the column.

(5) Get the students to read them out as the final step.

The two activities shown above should not only give the reader both the opportunity to speak about the title or heading and the purposes for reading, but also should cause them to confirm his/her predictions in the process of reading. This should also lead to an active mental process such as inferring by the reader.

5.2 Examples of Paraphrase, Summary and Inference Tasks

In the process of reading, the reader tries to extract the writer's message from the text, and then to interpret it by paraphrasing, summarizing and inferring. As discussed in Chapter 4, these activities are highly likely to lead to speech production. Four types of such activities are shown here.

5.2.1 Information Gap

The more background the reader shares with the writer, the better s/he is able to infer the content. Similarly, in a conversational scene, the more common knowledge the speaker shares with the listener, the better the speaker conveys his/her message to the listener. Information gap activities are one way of practicing this. With such activities, the readers share the same text with different segments of vital information omitted. By sharing the information, through speaking to his/her partner(s), the reader can find the omitted information.

One of the most common examples of this activity is the task of completing maps or pictures. In this task, however, visual factors are used rather than a written text. Instead of using maps or pictures, the filling in of charts, application forms, or cards on which an incident

is described could be used, which should integrate reading and oral communication more. These activities are generally done as pair/group work.

5.2.2 Scrambled Options

The basic task of these activities is rearranging a series of sentences into a logical paragraph, or paragraphs into a logical text. Through these activities, the reader paraphrases, summarizes and infers, and also engages in speaking. The procedure is outlined below:

【before class】

(1) Cut one text(paragraph) into a number of sections(sentences).

(2) Paste the pieces onto the paper (board), with clear divisions between them.

【in class】

(1) Have the students read each section(sentence) of the paper(paragraph).

(2) Get them to re-order the sections(sentences) to make the flow logically sequent.

(3) Have them read out their summary of the rearranged sections(sentences).

Furthermore, by rearranging this procedure and using pair/group work, the process of reading can be much more active, and closely related to speaking. The adjusted procedure might be as follows.

(1) Divide the students into as many groups as the number of the sections.

(2) Have each group read one section. (Each group is supposed to read only one section cut from the text.)

(3) Get each group to give the gist of their section to the class. (Each group talks about the gist before telling it to the class.)

(4) Write the gist from each group on the board.

(5) Have the students re-order each sentence into a logical flow. (The students talk about the flow in pair/group work.)

This activity should enrich the reader's awareness of contextual cohesion and also detract from too great an emphasis on the sense of separate sentences or words.

5.2.3 What Comes Next?

Reading involves some inference of the context on the reader's part. While reading the text, the reader should be able to infer what is written next.

One of the simplest procedures is as follows:

(1) Get the students to read a story with the ending deleted.

(2) Have them try orally to make up an ending consistent with the story in pair/group work.

(3) Give the students the original ending and get them to compare it with their own ending.

Instead of the ending, the middle part of a story could also be deleted. Besides a story, a eight-frame comic strip with one frame missing might be used in this activity.

5.2.4 Problem Solving

Bryne(1983) suggests that reading is often likely to lead to speaking. To give a simple example, if an advertisement for a job appears in the newspaper, the reader may discuss it with someone or telephone and inquire about the job. Thus a nexus might be formed: from reading to speaking. Bryne's example suggests that problem-solving activities might encourage the students to read the text and talk together to find a solution to tasks or problems that have been set. A well-known example is "The Desert Dilemma." The procedure is shown below:

(1) Give the students the instructions in which a complex situation is set, such as a desert survival situation, and have them read them.

(2) Have the students express their opinion about possible means of survival in pair/group work.

Besides survival instructions, major public events or subjects of current interest and controversy might well be used for this activity.

The four activities mentioned above suggest that reading the text might be used as a stimulus to speech production through active mental processes which take place such as paraphrase, summary and inference.

5.3 Significance of Pair/Group Work

In a classroom activity, the nexus from reading to speaking might well be formed better when the process of reading gets closer to replicating a real-life situation. As seen in this chapter, all the example activities may involve pair/group work. In terms of oral communication in a classroom, pair/group work may connect reading tasks with speaking far better than plenary work. Pair/group work has high efficiency in that students have more opportunities to speak. There are some problems such as incorrectness, selection of pair/group members, or noise during work. These problems, however, can be solved by the teacher's endeavor to focus on communicative efficiency and to reform the pairs/groups if necessary.

Papalia (1987) points out that students learn how to extract meaning and interpret the content from their peers. He also suggests that they have the opportunity to decode and interpret the script and inject their own reaction in association with others. This indicates that the interaction between the text and speaking might be accelerated through pair/group work. It is my assertion that pair/group work might well be introduced positively into a practical method of teaching English.

6. Some Suggestions for Teaching Plans and Individual Study to Develop Oral Skills through Active Mental Processing

Based on the ideas of examples in chapter 5, practical teaching plans and individual study to connect the process of reading with speaking activity are shown in this chapter. Through these, students should be capable of taking an active role in the learning process. These plans are intended for upper-intermediate and advanced students.

6.1 Teaching Plans

The plans focus on both reading and speaking activities. Therefore, the process of teaching grammar or sentence patterns is not referred to here.

6.1.1 Teaching Plan 1

1. Class: The first-year undergraduates
2. Text: Reading Pass 2 Second Edition (NAN' UN-DO)
3. Reading material: Unit 1 "Millennials"
4. Stages

(1) Greeting

(2) Show and Talk

A student brings something important to him/herself and talk about it in class. After the talk, the student asks the class several questions about the object.

(3) Review of Target Grammar

① Present perfect tense

② Passive voice

These stages(① · ②) are carried out with the text closed.

(4) Target Words

The students open the texts, check the answers in "Vocabulary Building", and practice each pronunciation by repeating the chosen words after the teacher.

(5) Reading

① Make sure the students' books are closed.

② Show these key words from the text on the screen.

> millennials, mobile technology, work relationships

③ Tell the students to associate these words with as many things as possible.

④ Call on several students to say them to the class in English.

⑤ Pairs the students(1 pair: A, B).

⑥ Give two kinds of the paper to each member of the pair:

Sheet A (the first, second and third paragraphs from the text) is given to A.

Sheet B (the fourth and fifth paragraphs from the text) is given to B.

Sheet A

We live in an age of profound changes. The Internet and smartphone have rewritten the ways we get information and communicate. The 2008 global economic crisis has had a lasting effect on the business world. Meanwhile, a whole generation of people has grown up with these new realities. These "millennials" are used to dealing with changes and meeting challenges head on.

Members of this generation were born between 1980 and 2000, around the start of the new millennium. That's why they are called "millennials." They were the first group of people to grow up using the Internet. Also, many share a talent for using electronic devices. Because of their high comfort level with technology, millennials are sometimes called the first "digital natives."

Mobile technology is of top importance to this generation. It's unusual to see a 20-year-old not carrying a cell phone. Being mobile is simply a way of life, both personally and professionally. One survey found that 92% of young workers would like to do some tasks outside of the office. They are experts at networking and enjoy working in teams.

【glossary】

profound – deep; meaningful　　crisis – serious problem
millennium – period of 1,000 years　　task – job

Sheet B

When it comes to work relationships, millennials are known for being informal. They respect skills and results above titles. They are also hard working, preferring interesting projects over routine office tasks. This kind of "me first" attitude may not be welcomed by every manager, yet it can be an asset. The late 2000s taught us that in many fields, companies must be smart and flexible to get ahead.

Worldwide, three out of every four workers in 2025 will be millennials. Their comfort woth technology, networking skills, and out of the box thinking will be important assets. So will their optimism. Surveys find that millennials are generally hopeful about the future. This can-do attitude will be needed as the world takes on climate change and other major challenges.

【glossary】

networking – connecting with other people　　routine – standard; every day
optimism – being positive and hopeful

Both sheets have a small glossary. The words in glossary should be used from the footnote shown in the same page of the text.

⑦ A question paper on Sheet A is given to student B and vice versa.

⑧ Have the students read the questions and guess the answers.

⑨ Get the students to exchange question papers with each other.

⑩ Have the students read the questions and then read their sheets to answer them.

⑪ Have the students give the answers orally to each other. (They can write down the answers from their partner on the question paper.)

⑫ Group together students with the same question paper(Groups of four are ideal for this) and have them check the answers orally with one another.

⑬ Do feedback in class:

Call on some students to give the answers they have checked in their group.

⑭ Have the students open the text and read it.

⑮ Check the answers and have the students underline the key sentences.

⑯ Choral reading: Make sure the students repeat after the CD/the teacher.

⑰ Individual reading

(6) Consolidation

True or False/multiple-choice comprehension questions about the content

[Rationale for the Reading Stage (5)]

The stages from ① to ④ are prediction tasks mentioned in 5.1.1 Headline or Title Expansion. So is ⑧. In ⑩, the students should be paraphrasing, summarizing and inferring while reading. Those activities lead to speaking, stage ⑪. Stage ⑧ to ⑪ are similar to Fanselow's suggested activities(1992). He suggests that Japanese students need several stages which include reading, to prepare them for speaking in the English classroom (1992). Stage ⑤ to ⑫ are derived from the idea in 5.3 'Significance of Pair/Group Work, and are also from the task given in 5.2.1 Information Gap. Group size is significant. Harmer (1993) suggests that groups of more than seven students can be unmanageable because of the fall in students' participation. In ⑫, the reason for group size of four is that it is easy for the students to change the seats two apiece back and forth and this enables them to move quickly. From ⑬ to ⑮, the students are developing the gist for the content into the more detail. In ⑯ and ⑰, ideally the students should think that they are not reading but speaking with prediction of the sentences which follow.

(In stage ⑨, if the students are made to ask the questions orally, their activity will integrates listening as well as reading.)

6.1.2 Teaching Plan 2

1. Class: The second-year undergraduates
2. Text: Readers' Forum 1 How-to English (NAN' UN-DO)
3. Reading material: Lesson 8 "HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE"
4. Stages

(1) Greeting

(2) Show and Talk: The same as that in 6.1.1 Teaching Plan 1

(3) Key Words

Show the key words from the text on the screen.

① Pronunciation

② Meaning: Give the students pictures, words or phrases having the same meaning as the

key words and elicit the words from them.

(4) Title Guessing

① Make sure the students' books are closed.

② Show the title from the text on the screen.

③ Tell the students to associate it with as many ideas about what kind of people they are and many ways to deal with them as possible.

④ Call on several students to say them to the class in English.

(5) Reading

① The students close their textbooks.

② Give the students the last paragraph of the text and have them read it.

③ Have the students predict the other part of the text.

④ Call on several students to tell the class their inference in English.

⑤ Have a group size of eight.

⑥ Give each group four extracts(A, B, C and D).

Each extract from the text is on a separate sheet of paper.

Sheet A (from the second paragraph)

Of course, we come across difficult people everywhere, not just at work. They come in all shapes and sizes, in all walks of life. They can make our lives miserable—if we let them. Perhaps the most difficult are the so-called Type A personalities. These hostile, abusive people give you a hard time—for no apparent reason. They constantly criticize you and lose their tempers. They are stubborn and inflexible. They blame you for every problem and mistake. Their only goal in life, it seems, is to upset you, to make you feel small and worthless.

Sheet B (from the first paragraph)

A recent CBS News survey finds that more than half of American workers are unhappy at work. This job dissatisfaction can be traced to several factors. For one, fewer and fewer workers find their jobs stimulating. Their jobs bore them (through whether that's the job's fault or their own is a good question). For another, the current recession and constant threat of lay-offs sabotage job security. Third, incomes have not kept up with inflation. And finally, workers are finding their bosses and co-workers increasingly hard to deal with.

Sheet C (from the fourth paragraph)

When a Type A person "attacks" you, say the self-help books, the worst thing you can do is to attack back. Don't answer anger with more anger, because, as *Psychology Today* puts it, "nastiness begets nastiness." Don't play their games; don't let them "win." Calmly put up boundaries that show that you will not tolerate such unacceptable behavior. Don't get upset no matter how hard the person tries to provoke you. Remove yourself from the situation, quietly, unemotionally. Don't waste valuable time and energy on explaining or defending yourself. Your silence and calmness will get your point across. Your composure—your "cool"—is all the explanation you need.

Sheet D (from the third paragraph)

So what is to be done? The institute of Mental Health urges us to remember, first of all, that dealing with difficult people requires tact and patience. It requires us to be bigger, stronger people. We must "consider the source" and see that people's "being difficult" usually stems from their upbringing and the emotional problems that has led to. Deep down, most Type A's feel that they have been wronged in some way and have no control. Consequently, they try to control others through their anger, rudeness, and criticism.

⑦ Pair the students in each group.

⑧ Have each pair read one of the four extracts and talk about the gist with each other.

⑨ Get each pair to present the gist of their extract to the group.

⑩ Have each group decide the order of the extracts.

⑪ Have each group present the gist of each extract and their order to the class.

⑫ Write the collective gist of each extract on the board.

A: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX…
B: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX…
C: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX…
D: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX…

⑬ Have the students read on the board and reconsider the order of the sheets A ～ D.

⑭ Some students present their order to the class. (They can keep to their original order in ⑩.)

⑮ Get the students to open the text and read it.

⑯ Check the answers and key points to decide the order.

⑰ Choral reading: The same as that in 6.1.1 Teaching Plan 1

⑱ Individual reading

(6) Consolidation

① Fill-in-the-blank questions in "READING COMPREHENSION 1"

② True or False questions in "READING COMPREHENSION 2"

③ Explain to the students the flow of the content of the text using the sentences written

on the board.

[Rationale for the Reading Stage (5)]

The main idea comes from the combined activities of 5.2.2 Scrambled Options and 5.2.3 What Comes Next. In 5.2.3 What Comes Next, the middle part or the ending is usually deleted. In this plan, however, the last paragraph is given and the other sections of the text are deleted (cf. ②). The students could have the gist of them from the activity in stage (4). Therefore, the deleted part might not be considered as the first part but the middle one. In these stages, as shown in 5.2.3 What Comes Next, the active process of inferring the context is carried out on the reader's part. In ⑧ and ⑨, the extracts should operate as stimuli, so the students are paraphrasing or summarizing them and producing their speech. In forming the groups (cf. ⑤), the number of the members seems to contradict Harmer's suggestion shown in 6.1.1 Teaching Plan 1. However, pair work activity is done within the group, that is, there are four pairs in one group. Effectively, therefore, there is a group of four working together rather than a group of eight. In addition, in the stages from ⑧ to ⑪, the flow of pair → group → plenary work shifts more smoothly. In ⑫, the collective sentences should be easy and simple. In ⑬, the students are also likely to be paraphrasing, summarizing and inferring, which should lead naturally into activity ⑭.

In both teaching plans, pair/group work activities should be taken seriously. Both activities should be carried out in English. During these activities, the teacher should walk among the students and should be both a monitor and facilitator. Sadow(1992) points out that the key to the success of pair/group work lies in instructions for the students so they understand well. In addition, the students should be told what the purpose of thse activities are, that is, to develop their oral skills through reading activities.

6.2 Continuing Activity outside the Classroom

Colleges with upper-intermediate or advanced students could advise them to read supplementary texts for individual study besides their set texts. This task seems to only involve students in more and more reading activities. Reading supplementary texts outside the classroom, however, could lead to speaking activities.

The selection of appropriate supplementary texts should be considered first of all. In reading for gist, one-long-story reading materials are often used. However, when the activity of speech production is focused on, a supplementary text with a variety of topics in it seems to enable students more easily to speak through reading. This is because students can choose something that interests them from among a wide range of short-story topics. The process from reading to speaking would be as follows (Students are given two or three copies of the book's Contents beforehand.):

(1) Students read each title.

(2) Students guess what each might be about, and come to the teacher to tell him/her their prediction of the content of each one.

(3) Students choose one topic and take the instruction sheet for it. (Instruction sheets on each topic should be in the teacher's pigeon hole.)

(4) Students read the instructions of which there are two types:

① Questions about the content.

② Summarized sentences with wrong information.

(5) Students come to the teacher and tell him/her what their ideas are now about the topic they have chosen.

(6) Students receive the text of their topic and start to read it.

(7) Students come to the teacher after finishing, and give him/her the answers to the instruction orally:

Students with instruction ① tell the teacher what the gist of their text is according to the questions.

Students with instruction ② point out to the teacher the wrong information and tell him/her about the gist.

(8) Students return to stage (3), and continue the same procedure again.

This activity suggests that articles from a newspaper or magazine such as *Newsweek, Japan Times ST* and so on, could be the reading materials, in addition to supplementary texts. In these cases, headlines might have the same role as the topics of supplementary texts do.

The first stage that students should get used to is the activity of inferring the content from a title or headline, and of talking about it. The stages (1) and (2) support this idea.

In the second stage, students should form the habit of paraphrasing, summarizing, and inferring before and while reading. The two types of instructions in stage (4), and stage (6) might well cause students to do this. Besides giving the instructions, having students make two or three questions about the content and checking if they can answer their own questions themselves might lead to these activities.

Finally these first and second stages should lead to the development of oral skills. The idea of coming to the teacher is based on the activity mentioned in 5.2.4 Problem Solving, which means the procedure mentioned so far is highly likely to lead to speaking. This task, however, gives teachers more work to do. So students could record themselves on CD instead. They should be told not to write down their talk in advance. As a further advanced activity, pair work outside the classroom might also be considered. Each student reads a different text or a different part of the text, and then makes questions for the other. Lastly the student exchanges texts and answers their partner's questions orally.

The processes mentioned above appear very difficult to carry through, because students'

native language surrounds them outside the classroom. Sadow (1987), however, points out a promising cue. He suggests that students' frequency of use of their native language will fade away as they become accustomed to the activity. Therefore, the goal of this procedure should be clarified to them. The feedback or evaluation to the students should also be done carefully. Dickenson (1987) supports this idea, pointing out that students must acquire the ability to learn a language by self-instruction. The more opportunities to speak students have, the more involved they should be in this activity.

7. Conclusion

This project has attempted to analyze some of the common links between reading and speaking skills and to present teaching plans based on knowledge of these common links, for upper-intermediate and advanced students in and outside the classroom.

The second chapter has suggested that the final stage in reading may require the reader to use productive skills rather than receptive ones. In other words, the reader's active mental processing such as paraphrasing, summarizing and inferring are indispensable in the decoding process. The third chapter has assumed that a speaker may convey his/her message in response to what s/he hears as a stimulus. In this process, the speaker appears to have the same mental processes as those in the reading process. Therefore, the fourth chapter has suggested that a text-based approach to developing oral skills should stem from active reading, that is, from these activities with the use of texts as stimuli. Based on this idea, the fifth chapter has shown several examples in which reading activities should lead to speech production through active mental processes, such as prediction before reading, and paraphrase, summary and inference while reading. This chapter has also suggested the significance of pair/group work, which has high efficiency in accelerating the interaction between the text and speaking, to strengthen these processes. The sixth chapter has applied the examples shown in the fifth chapter to practical teaching plans and to students' continuing study outside the classroom. In these plans, pair/group work activities are introduced to encourage the active mental processes mentioned so far.

This project has focused on reading activities, in which Japanese students are much involved in and outside the classroom, and has indicated that these activities could be used as preparatory steps to speaking.

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