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## How Children Learn and Acquire Oral Competence of English as a Foreign Language

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This case study is a kind of qualitative research, and is intended to delineate how the children in a kindergarten got successful in developing oral competence of English. It was merely focused on the collaborative attempts of the teachers, the school management and the family. The data were collected by observing the children learning English particularly their oral activity; interviewing the classroom teachers, the parents, the headmaster and staff. The observation was done to see subjects' interaction during the class. Three children were purposively selected as the subjects since they were academically more excellent than the other children, actively using English in their daily familial communication; and were relatively at the same age. The results of the research assert that teacher-student classroom interaction, rules enforced by the school management and familial English environment are assigned to be the influential factors behind oral competence of students. The teachers seem actively engaged in the interaction during the class. They stimulate students by asking questions and giving responses. It also stimulated a stronger positive relationship between teachers and students. The school management facilitates English-direct speaking by using English in their daily language at school and creating English atmosphere in school, while parents maximizes it by doing English interaction at home. Some facilities like providing books, vocabulary posters, buying some DVDs are also done by parents to support their children in active communication.

Keywords : oral competence, learn, acquire, interaction

## Reflection on the Historical Development of a Common Understanding of Children-teacher Relationship at Shinshu University's Fuzoku Nagano Elementary School

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Through case analyses, this study intends to examine the core values of Shinshu University's Nagano Elementary School that maintains that children or teachers should 'be with someone/something'. A century ago, during the Taisho period, teachers at this school practiced 'research classes', inquiries that valued 'learning' from outside the classroom, where they lived, as the principle behind 'Learning by doing' 1917' 937). The teachers realized that children learn from experience and inquiry, and not from schooling and training. Therefore, they recognized the need to not compel children to study; instead, their learning should arise from their nature. The 'research class' report characterizes a teacher's role as a 'person who perceives children's activities' and as a 'person to follow.' The tradition is practiced even today with teachers being regarded as the individuals 'to be' with children. It does not mean that children learn only by themselves, but rather that teachers should be with the children creating lessons so that proactively and dynamically they can become agents of their learning. This study collected historical documents from the 'research class' teachers, interviewed the teacher who first used the term 'to be,' and gathered vocal data from the lesson study conference at Nagano Elementary School.

This presentation aims to clarify the characteristics of the school's history, culture, and philosophy that underlie the teachers' shared practices by analyzing the following cases: (1) Case 1 examines the educational value of 'no interruption' within the scenario of teachers awaiting and observing children's actions; (2) Case 2 examines teachers' common understanding of 'being through it together' within the scenario of early graders developing mastery through practice on crossing a river without being taught; and (3) Case 3 examines the shared attitude of 'inquire with' where teachers also become learners when they inquire together with children.

The above cases demonstrate our belief that support from teachers at the school is necessary and based on children's needs. The cases reflect the teachers' beliefs concerning the school's core value of 'to be with someone/something.' The findings suggest a further development of our learning community.

## Successful Communication in Mathematics Classroom

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Currently, the meaning of communication, which is a frequently occurring concept, is often taken for granted and thus, it is rarely reflected upon or problematized (Carey, 2009). In a teaching situation, it is by communication of the mathematical content and the meaning this content has, that the students are able to partake in knowledge and skills aimed at attaining a certain goal. The guidelines that are mentioned in the Swedish curriculum indicate that communication should be central in a mathematics classroom situation. The purpose of this presentation is to describe the possibilities offered in the classroom in order to communicate the mathematical content (in algebra). It also aims at identifying the possibilities that create successful communication in the classroom.

Despite the extensive existing research focusing on communication, there are many reasons to further reflect on this term within mathematics education (Sfard, 2008). One of those reasons is that there is a number of overlapping and competing communication theories and definitions. This makes the concept of communication diffuse and hard to use in an operative way. In order to understand the possibilities offered for communication of mathematical contents in the classroom, it is important to find out how teachers and students experience the mathematical content. Only after this is done, is it possible to conclude the possibilities that constitute successful communication.

Variation theory was the principal theoretical perspective adopted in the study (Bowden & Marton, 1998; Marton, 2015). The central idea in variation theory is that discernment of certain aspects of an object of learning depends on whether a person experiences variations that correspond to these aspects. A student can discern aspects of the object of learning and differentiate values related to this aspect. The aspect is the experience of difference, and the values are those things that differ (Marton, 2015).

The research approach used was educational design (McKenney & Reeves, 2012; Plomp, 2007). The aim of educational design research is to produce useful and sustainable results for regular use in school. Some important findings are: 1) Communicative success is linked to a hierarchic structure of communicative events with a strong compositionality; 2) Teachers support successful classroom communication by using research results found in mathematics education to open up patterns of variation in the critical aspects of an object of learning; 3) Teachers also support successful classroom communication through a systematic analysis of the parts of an object of learning, relations between parts, how to relate the parts to each other in different ways, the relation between the parts, the relation between the parts and the whole as well as the relation between different wholes; 4) The choice/construction of tasks with focus on what may vary and what stays invariant, give students' different opportunities to distinguish aspects that could lead to algebraic generalizations.

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