

# **The Importance of Understanding Issues on Intercultural Communication in Foreign Language Learning**

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## **Abstract**

This paper describes several issues on foreign language learning for intercultural communication. It briefly discusses the importance of intermingling cultural issues in teaching foreign languages and the present situation in teaching English as a foreign language in Japan. Taking cultural matters into consideration, it introduces an integrated lesson taught in a language school in Japan. It includes introducing vocabulary, listening comprehension, pronunciation, grammar practice, and communicative activity.

## **Language Learning Intermingled with Cultural Issues**

Recently the traditional Grammar-Translation Method has been evaluated less positively by a number of Japanese teachers of English. "Communication," which is one of the key words designated in the new curricula of Japanese schools, has been far more stressed than ever in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Japan (Takashima 1995). This is proved by the fact that Oral Communication was introduced to Japanese high schools in 1994. "Intercultural communication", "globalization" and "understanding other cultures" have also become crucial themes. However, although speaking and listening abilities, which are what is called the practical parts of language use, are drawing the attention of both the language teacher and learner and the importance of "intercultural communication" is now being emphasized, it is the undeniable fact that only the idealistic vision of what teaching English should be is being pursued without the teacher's positive attitudes toward "communication" and without any drastic amelioration against the whole entrance examination system in this country. Especially, the latter problem has caused many learners to lose their motivation to realize true communication (Katano 1999). In Oral Communication only "listening comprehension" is often the main concern while "speaking" and "understanding other cultures" are not taught in many cases, still less "debates and discussions" (Takahashi 1995). It has been reported that there is an Oral Communication class that shows students movies in English without any communicative activities after

they watch them and that another high school asks its students to purchase Oral Communication textbooks and learning materials, which are hardly ever used (Yamasaki 1999). The problems of the teacher's attitude, methodology and material development still remain unsolved.

The issues of "globalization" and "understanding other cultures" should never be underrated or ignored in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The teacher should keep in mind that language is part of culture and that he or she should not persist merely in the syntactic analysis of the language, the development of phonological techniques or the training to develop the learner's listening ability. No matter how well the learner may express himself or herself in English syntactically or phonetically, if the learner ignores the cultural values and violates the rules of the target culture, he or she will fail to achieve good communication. In teaching a foreign language it is desirable to incorporate some kind of training which includes the factors of recognizing the values of the target culture, accepting those values, and if possible, acting in the target culture in an appropriate way in order for the learner to realize smooth intercultural communication (Tsukada 1998). To facilitate good intercultural communication, not only does the teacher need some living experience in and some knowledge of the target culture but also both the teacher and the learner need to take a positive attitude toward the target culture. By giving the major parts of the textbook some theme related to cultural matters, the teacher may be able to draw the learner's interest in and attention to the language, and as a result, the learner could possibly realize true intercultural communication.

### **The Present Situation and Some Problems in Teaching English in Japan**

In recent years more and more Japanese public universities and colleges have tried to adopt listening comprehension tests in their entrance examinations. Listening is an important skill to acquire in foreign language classes and to apply in "real life" communication. Since Oral Communication was adopted in 1994 as a required subject in Japanese high schools, listening comprehension has been far more emphasized than ever before. However, the traditional Grammar-Translation Method, which can prevent learners from understanding cultures different from theirs and can also bring about a communication gap and delay mutual understanding between the learner's culture and his or her target culture (Yamamoto 1995), is still a popular methodology. It could be more meaningful for the language learner if cultural matters were included in the activities in his or her foreign language study.

Due to the lack of drastic changes in the high school and college entrance examination systems in

Japan, the country's junior high and high school curricula have traditionally placed limited importance on oral communication skills. This also holds true for English pronunciation skills. Pronunciation is not usually emphasized, partly because it is somewhat difficult to evaluate the learner's pronunciation skills through written tests. Although acquiring pronunciation skills may not be the most significant issue in oral communication for the foreign language learner, the learner's pronunciation needs to be good enough so that the meanings he or she wants to convey are not misunderstood during a conversation. It is also encouraging for language learners if they know they can produce and recognize at least some of the sounds difficult for them. It is very frustrating if they only know the difference but cannot produce or recognize them. By becoming able to produce and recognize sounds in their target language, language learners could possibly become tolerant of cultures different from theirs and even try to understand the values of the target culture.

Not only does the language teacher need to have a positive attitude toward communication and to attempt to realize communication in English willingly by clarifying and confirming cultural issues that he or she is not certain of, but also the language teacher needs to know the importance of teaching structure for communication. Although Krashen (1985) makes an objection to it, the importance of the pedagogy of structure is widely accepted among many language teachers (Takashima 1995). Teaching structure in a classroom situation should not be ignored even in a class that lays stress on communication. The important thing is how the teacher teaches structure or what changes the teacher needs to make in his or her pedagogical structure in order to realize foreign language communication in students. In many English structure classes in Japan abstract metalanguage is used to analyze language, and language use in actual communication is often ignored. It is necessary for the teacher to teach structure by relating rules to context and referring to meanings conveyed and their functions, not by focusing on analyzing and composing individual sentences. Even if the learner has the ability to understand and control grammar that does not necessarily mean that the learner has the ability to communicate effectively in English. Canale and Swain (1980) take up grammatical competence with discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence as important components of communicative competence. Teaching structure is necessary whatever materials may be used. As Widdowson (1978) mentions regarding the importance of teaching structure, "Language learning is essentially grammar learning." However, it is necessary to make learning structure more meaningful to the learner without clinging to only mechanical practice. The teacher should always keep in mind that the ultimate goal of teaching structure is to help the learner

realize effective communication.

Recently an increasing number of students have been coming to Japan from abroad to study, and English is usually one of the mandatory courses to finish their program. The teacher should also take each learner's cultural and individual backgrounds into consideration in teaching structure. For example, some Asian learners may have difficulty in guessing at a grammar explanation in front of other learners when there is a good chance that they may make mistakes (Fathman 1976) or may exhibit avoidance behavior when they encounter an unfamiliar structure (Schachter 1974). John (1972) also contends that demanding oral performance is not reasonable and is even overwhelming for Navajo students because not words but actions have a higher value in their native culture. Individual differences in avoiding a new structure or willingness to take the risk of guessing are also observed in people from varying cultural backgrounds (Bailey et al. 1976, Madden et al. 1978).

In approaching the language learning task, Politzer (1972), Hartnett (1974) and Ramsey (1977) emphasize the importance of each learner's attitudes, cognitive styles and different learning strategies. Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) have found in their experimental research that some learners attach importance to "accuracy" while others to "fluency." Baecher (1976) claims that language learners have different cognitive styles such as "theoretical visual linguistics: the ability to find meaning from words you see" and "theoretical auditory linguistics: the ability to acquire meaning from hearing spoken words." It is vital for the language teacher to consider not only external factors such as metalinguistic elements, contents of learning, and methodology but also internal factors such as each learner's cultural values, personality, attitude, strategies and styles. The next section raises an example of an integrated lesson for EFL classes in Japan. Taking up the issue of "currency" as an easy example of cultural matters, the lesson introduces some activities in teaching vocabulary, listening, pronunciation, and structure.

## **Integrated Lesson**

### ***Class description***

Class is held at a private language school in Nagasaki, a city in the southern part of Japan. Students attend English classes for a total of 2 hours a day, 3 days a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Eight Japanese students attend this class, all of whom are in the tenth grade (15-16 years of age) and are low-intermediate students. All of them are female, go to the same private high school and are planning on visiting the United States during the summer vacation

through an organized homestay program. During their stay, they will study English and learn about American culture and way of life at a private language school.

This lesson is based on Kenji's Journal II from Lesson VI in *Life in English*. I adapted the journal section in the text in order to make it clearer for the students to understand and to avoid things which might be too obvious for them. For example, I changed "the name of the city on Line 3" into "the name of the city where I cashed my traveler's check on Line 3" so that the students will understand which city is being talked about. I also eliminated the sentence "A twenty is worth twenty dollars," which seems too obvious for the students. I added some sentences to give the students more information about American currency.

I discarded the part in which a personal check is introduced because I thought that it was very unlikely for the students to have or use their personal checks or to receive personal checks from others during their rather short stay in the United States. I changed most of the comprehension questions due to changes made in the journal section. I kept the picture in the Writing Assignment section for the communicative activity so that the students could be engaged in as close to a real situation as possible actually using a traveler's check. I adapted dialog 1 in the text in order to make it sound more natural. I discarded dialogs 2 and 3 because I felt these dialogs were not very realistic. I felt there were not very many situations in which people wanted or asked for change (a five and five ones) for a ten dollar bill on the street. I kept the Dialogs for Completion section for a review in the communicative activity but made some changes due to changes made in the dialog used in the pronunciation exercise. I did not use the Expressions (II) section because most of the exercises are about dialogs 2 and 3, which I excluded. In the lesson "T" stands for "Teacher" and "Ss" stands for "Students."

### ***Introducing Vocabulary***

(T may also use this section as pre-listening activities for listening comprehension.)

T: Today we are going to learn about money. What kind of money do we use in Japan?

Ss: Yen.

T: Right. Do you know what kind of money they use in America?

Ss: Dollar. / Cent.

T: That's right. They use different kind of money from ours. Every country uses different kind of

money. And today we are going to learn about money they use in America.  
(Distribute the handouts.)

T: This is American money. (Show Ss a real penny, nickel, dime, and quarter and pass them around. Ss monkey with them with curiosity. Most of them have never seen or touched real American money before.)

T: What do you think? Do they look any different from Japanese money?

Ss: Yes.

T: How?

S4: They all have face.

S5: Most are silver.

S6: No hole. (Some Japanese coins have a hole in the middle.)

S3: They are small. (Most Japanese coins are bigger in size than American coins.)

T: Good. Do you know what we call this kind of money? Money made out of metal?

Ss: Coin! (Many of the students may probably be able to figure out the word because there is a word in Japanese, *koin*, which has been borrowed from the English word "coin.")

T: Right. Please repeat after me.

coin

coin

American coins are small.

American coins are smaller than Japanese coins.

Ss: coin

Ss: coin

Ss: American coins are small.

Ss: American coins are smaller than Japanese coins.

(T writes "1. coin" on the board.)

(Ss write the word "coin" next to "1" on page 1 of their handout. This way Ss can reconfirm their comprehension of the words they learn by looking at the pictures and the words together.)

(T asks Ss to give the coins back to him or her. T gets back the coins.)

T: (holding up a penny) Do you know how many cents is this coin?

Ss: Hmmm.

T: It doesn't say how much on it. This is one cent and is called a "penny." Repeat after me.

a penny

a penny

A penny is one cent.

A penny is one cent.

Ss: a penny

Ss: a penny

Ss: A penny is one cent.

Ss: A penny is one cent.

(T writes "2. penny" on the board, and Ss write the word next to "2" on their handout.)

T: Good. (holding up a nickel) What about this coin? This is a bit bigger than a penny. Can you guess how much this coin is?

S2: 5 cents?

T: Right. But it doesn't say 5 cents on the coin and is called a "nickel." Repeat after me.

a nickel

Ss: a nickel

a nickel

Ss: a nickel

A nickel is 5 cents.

Ss: A nickel is 5 cents.

A nickel is bigger than a penny.

Ss: A nickel is bigger than a penny.

(T writes "3. nickel" on the board, and Ss write the word next to "3" on their handout.)

T: OK. (holding up a dime) Here is another small coin? Do you know how much this one is?

S3: Half cent?

S4: 2 cents?

T: Well, it's ten cents.

S3: But it looks smaller than penny and nickel.

T: I know. It's funny, isn't it? But look. A fifty-yen coin is smaller than a ten-yen coin, right?

Ss: Hmmm.

T: Anyway, this ten-cent coin is called a "dime." Repeat after me.

a dime

Ss: a dime

a dime

Ss: a dime

A dime is ten cents.

Ss: A dime is 10 cents.

A dime is smaller than a penny or a nickel.

Ss: A dime is smaller than a penny or nickel.

T: Good.

(T writes "4. dime" on the board, and Ss write the word next to "4" on their handout.)

T: OK. (holding up a quarter) This is the biggest coin we have here. Can you guess how much this coin is?

S5: 20 cents.

S6: 30 cents.

T: Well, the right answer is "25 cents."

S5: Why 25 cents? Isn't it odd? Why not 20, 30, or 40?

T: Well, in America the number "25" is not really an odd number. Strictly speaking, it is, especially in Math, but people in America don't feel 25 is odd very much because 25 is exactly 1/4 of one. They divide one into two and divide the half into two again. Does it make sense to you?

Ss: Yes. / Hmmm.

T: Anyway, this 25-cent coin is called a "quarter." 1/4 is a quarter. Please repeat.

a quarter

a quarter

A quarter is 25 cents.

A quarter is bigger than a penny, a nickel, or a dime.

A quarter is 1/4.

Ss: a quarter

Ss: a quarter

Ss: A quarter is 25 cents.

Ss: A quarter is bigger than a penny, a nickel, or a dime.

Ss: A quarter is 1/4.

T: Good.

(T writes "5. quarter" on the board, and Ss write the word next to "5" on their handout.)

(holding up real dollar bills) this is also American money.

(T passes around one-, five-, ten-, and twenty-dollar bills.)

T: OK? Again, do you see any difference between American and Japanese money?

Ss: Yes.

T: How do American money look?

S7: They look all same.

S8: They are green.

S1: Same size. (Japanese bills are different in size and color.)

T: Good. These bills are more valuable than coins. A bill is money made out of paper. Please repeat.

a bill

a bill

American bills are green.

American bills are the same size.

Ss: a bill

Ss: a bill

Ss: American bills are green.

Ss: American bills are the same size.

T: Good.

(T writes "6. bill" on the board, and Ss write the word next to "6" on their handout.)

(T asks Ss to give the bills back to him and get them back.)

T: (holding up a photocopy of a traveler's check) OK. Here is another kind of American money. This is a traveler's check and not real money. But you can use it just like ordinary money when you travel. (Tell Ss it is a photocopy.) You buy traveler's checks at a bank. Please repeat after me.

a traveler's check

Ss: a traveler's check

a traveler's check

Ss: a traveler's check

You buy traveler's checks at a bank.

Ss: You buy traveler's checks at a bank.

You buy traveler's checks at a bank.

Ss: You buy traveler's checks at a bank.

T: Good.

(T writes "7. traveler's check" on the board, and Ss write the words next to "7" on their handout.)

T: You can also cash them at a bank. But you have to do one important thing when you use them or cash them. Do you know what it is?

S2: Put your name stamp.

T: Interesting. But do people from other country have their name stamps?

S3: Write your name.

T: Right. You have to put your signature on your traveler's checks. In English, not in Japanese, OK? Please repeat.

a signature

Ss: a signature

a signature

Ss: a signature

Put your signature on a traveler's check.

Ss: Put your signature on a traveler's check.

Put your signature on a traveler's check  
in English.

Ss: Put your signature on a traveler's check  
In English.

T: Good.

(T writes "8. signature" on the board, and Ss write the word next to "8" on their handout.)

T: Can you write your signature in English?

Ss: Yes. / Well, maybe.

T: Your signature has to be the one of your own. And something that nobody can imitate. Otherwise, someone may use your traveler's checks when you lose them, right?  
(Make sure Ss have all the vocabulary written down. Then, erase the board.)

## Listening Comprehension

T: OK. Now, I'm going to read a journal that a Japanese student, Kenji, wrote when he stayed in the United States last summer. This is about American money. There are some questions on page 2 of your handout that you need to answer while listening. But, I'm going to read it twice, so don't worry if you don't answer everything the first time.

(T reads through the questions before reading the journal. See if Ss have any questions before beginning. If there are no questions, read it once and ask again if there are any questions. Once questions have been answered, read it for the second time.)

(T reads the following.)

This afternoon John, a friend of mine, took me to the bank, and I cashed a traveler's check for fifty dollars. My traveler's checks look like this. (Hold up a picture of a traveler's check.) My signature is on Line 1. (Point to Line 1 on the copy of a traveler's check.) The check number is on Line 1, too. I wrote the date on Line 2 and the name of the city where I cashed my traveler's check on Line 3. I wrote CASH on Line 4, and I signed the check on Line 5. Line 5 and Line 1 have the same signature. (Indicate each line when it is mentioned.) I told the bank teller that I wanted to cash my traveler's check. She asked me for my I.D. I gave my passport and my traveler's check to her. She looked at them and gave my passport back to me with fifty dollars. She gave me a twenty, two tens, a five, and five ones. All the bills are green and show numbers such as 1, 5, 10, and 20. A dollar is a hundred cents. Some people call a dollar "a buck." I don't know why. American coins are small. They don't have numbers. I have to remember that a penny is one cent, a nickel is five cents, a dime is ten cents, and a quarter is twenty-five cents. I paid 85 cents to take a bus to a supermarket. John gave me change for a dollar. I gave the bus driver 3 quarters and a dime.

T: Now, you've heard it twice. Did you answer all the questions?

Ss: Yes. / No.

T: OK. Let's go over the answers together.

Where did Kenji go with John?

Ss: The bank.

Right. Kenji and John went to the bank.

For how much did Kenji cash his traveler's check?

Ss: 50 dollars.

Right. He cashed a traveler's check for 50 dollars.

What did Kenji write on Line 3?

Ss: The name of the city.

Yes. He wrote the name of the city where he cashed the traveler's check on Line 3.

What did Kenji write on Line 1 and Line 5?

Ss: His signature.

Yes. He had to put his signature on Line 1 and Line 5 in exactly the same way.

What did Kenji give to the bank teller?

Ss: His traveler's check.

Is that all?

Ss: His passport.

Right. He gave the bank teller his traveler's check and passport. Did the bank teller give Kenji's passport back to him?

Ss: Yes.

Did the bank teller give Kenji's traveler's check back to him?

Ss: No.

Right. The bank teller gave Kenji's passport back to him with 50 dollars, not with his traveler's check. What is another name for a "dollar?"

Ss: A buck.

Right. You are listening so closely. Some people call a dollar "a buck."

How much did Kenji pay to take a bus?

Ss: 85 cents.

That's right. He paid 85 cents to take a bus.

T: How many quarters did Kenji give to the bus driver?

Ss: Three.

Good. He gave the driver 3 quarters and a dime.

Good job! Do you have all the right answers now?

Ss: Yes.

(If Ss are not sure of any of the questions and answers, the parts that have the key words can be read a few times for Ss to clarify the problems.)

T: OK. I'm going to read it from the beginning once again. See if you can understand it better. (After discussing key words and key listening points, Ss will probably understand it better. This way, Ss may be able to gain self-confidence in listening, perceiving their listening abilities growing.)

#### A. Post Listening Activities

T: Do you have any questions about Kenji's journal? (Ss may or may not ask questions. If a student asks a question, try to have other students answer the question with the teacher's help.)

T: I think you listened very closely. You answered all the questions. Which questions were hard?

Ss: (mixed responses)

S1: I understood the journal very well because we knew it was about American money.

T: Good. When you listen to something, like a radio or TV or anything, it's important to have some kind of background knowledge of the subjects. It's also important for you to guess or think what people are trying to say or want to say. Anyway, after listening to what a Japanese student experienced in America, are you all excited about going to the United States?

Ss: Yes. / I'm scared.

T: Which part of America are you going to?

Ss: California. / Colorado. / Florida.

T: Good. Now, do you think you can use money in America?

Ss: Yes. / Well, maybe.

T: How about traveler's checks? Do you think you can cash them at a bank?

Ss: Yes. / Maybe.

T: Can you sign in English?

Ss: Yes. / No.

S2: Can I cash a traveler's check at a store?

T: Well, probably not. Usually you buy something at a store with traveler's checks. They can give you change, though. (Show Ss 50 and 100 dollar bills and a half dollar and a dollar coins. Pass them around. It will probably be entertaining for Ss to look at especially those coins because they are rather large and heavy compared with the other four they had already looked at or any Japanese coins. Tell Ss these coins are not very often used in every-day life.)

### ***Pronunciation***

T: OK. Now, in Kenji's journal, tell me again what Kenji gave to the bank teller.

Ss: His passport and traveler's check.

T: Then, what happened?

Ss: The teller gave his passport back to him.

T: That's right. Kenji got his passport back. (Write the word "back" on the left of the board.)

OK. Then, can you tell me again another name for a dollar?

Ss: A buck.

T: Right. Some people call a dollar "a buck." (Write the word "buck" on the right of the board.)

*back*

*buck*

### **A. Attention Pointer**

T: Look at the two words I wrote on the board. Listen carefully to the vowel sound in each word.

back (Underline the vowel.)

buck (Underline the vowel.)

back (Write æ under the vowel.)

buck (Write ʌ under the vowel.)

*back*  
æ

*buck*  
ʌ

T: Now, please repeat after me.

back (Point to the word on the board.)

Ss: back

back (Point to the word on the board.)

Ss: back

buck (Point to the word on the board.)

Ss: buck

buck (Point to the word on the board.)

Ss: buck

back – buck (Point to the word on the board as spoken.)

Ss: back –buck

back – buck (Point to the word on the board as spoken.)

Ss: back –buck

back – buck (Point to the word on the board as spoken.)

Ss: back –buck

Good.

### A. Inductive Generalization

T: Look at my mouth when I say “back.” (T may want to exaggerate somewhat.)

back back Is my mouth open wide when I say “back,” or is it open a little bit?

back

Ss: Open wide.

Open wide. Does everyone agree? Look again.

back

Ss: Open wide.

OK. Now, watch my mouth when I say “buck.” (Point to the word on the board.)

See if it is open wide or just a little.

buck buck Is it open wide or just a little?

buck

Ss: Just a little.

OK. Good. Now, put your fingers on your cheeks like this. (T models. Put his/her fingers on his/her cheeks.)

Please repeat after me.

back

Ss: back

back

Ss: back

buck

Ss: buck

buck

Ss: buck

Can you feel the difference when you say the word?

Ss: Yes.

T: Good. Your mouth is wide open when you say “back.” When you say “buck,” do you feel your cheeks moving as much as when you say “back?”

Ss: No.

T: OK. That means your mouth is only open a little when you say “buck.”

**B. Recognition Practice – Same/Different Drill)**

T: I’m going to say two words. You tell me if the vowel sound in each word is the same or different. For example, if I say “back – back,” you say (pause, then with Ss) “same,” OK? Let’s try it.

back – back	Ss: same
back – back	Ss: same
back – buck	Ss: different
hat – hut	Ss: different
cut – cut (individually)	S1: same
bat – bat	S2: same
luck –lack	S3: different
ran – run	S4: different
lamp – lamp	S5: same
back – buck	S6: different

Good.

**D. Recognition Practice – Vowel Sound Recognition Drill**

T: Now, I’m going to say only one word. Listen carefully and watch my mouth. If I say a word with the /æ/ sound (Point to the word “back” on the left of the board), raise your left hand. If I say the /ʌ/ sound (Point to the word “buck” on the right of the board), raise your right hand. Let’s practice once.

back (T raises his/her left hand facing the board.) Ss: (Raise their left hand.)

buck (T raises his/her right hand facing the board.) Ss: (Raise their right hand.)

Are you ready?

back	Ss: (left)
bus	Ss: (right)
hung	Ss: (right)
come (individually)	S7: (right)
mad	S8: (left)
bath	S1: (left)
up	S2: (right)
ask	S3: (left)
much	S4: (right)
just	S5: (right)
rack	S6: (left)
back	S7: (left)

Good.

**E. Production Practice – Repetition of Minimal Pairs**

T: Please repeat after me.

back – buck  
lamp – lump  
task – tusk  
drag – drug  
cap – cup (individually)  
lack – luck  
mad – mud  
bat – but  
ran – run  
hang – hung  
sang – sung

Ss: back – buck  
Ss: lamp – lump  
Ss: task – tusk  
Ss: drag – drug  
S8: cap – cup  
S1: lack – luck  
S2: mad – mud  
S3: bat – but  
S4: ran – run  
S5: hang – hung  
S6: sang – sung

Good.

**F. Production Practice – Opposites Drill**

T: If I say “back,” you say “buck.” (Indicate the words on the board.)  
If I say “buck,” you say “back.” (Indicate the words on the board.) Let’s try once.

back (Indicate the word on the board. Then, with Ss.)

Ss: buck

T: OK. Ready?

back  
buck  
bag  
much (individually)  
rug  
ankle  
stuff  
track  
fun

Ss: buck  
Ss: back  
Ss: bug  
S7: match  
S8: rag  
S1: uncle  
S2: staff  
S3: truck  
S4: fan

Great.

**H. Production Practice – Dialogue**

(The following dialogue appears on page 3 of the handout.)

*a conversation between a customer and a bank teller at a bank*

Bank Teller: May I help you?  
Kenji: I'd like to cash a traveler's check.  
Bank Teller: Certainly. For how much?  
Kenji: Fifty dollars.  
Bank Teller: All right. But I need your passport.  
Kenji: Here you are.  
Bank Teller: Thank you. How do you want it.  
Kenji: I'd like a twenty, two tens, a five, and five ones.  
Bank Teller: Right. Here you are. Have a nice day.  
Kenji: You too.

(Rehearse this dialogue with Ss as follows.)

T: (says each line) Ss: (repeat each line)  
T: (says the bank teller's line) Ss: (say Kenji's line)

T: Look at the dialogue on page 3 of the handout. (Rehearse as described above.) Now, get into groups of two and work on this dialogue. Take turns and switch roles. Try to pay attention to what your partner is saying and his or her pronunciation, especially to the words underlined, OK? (T should wander from group to group.)

### I. Communicative Use

T: Look at the bottom of page 3 of the handout. There is a list of words which have either the / æ / or the / ʌ / sound. Let's practice pronouncing each word first.

a traveler's check	Ss: a traveler's check
a bank	Ss: a bank
a bank teller	Ss: a bank teller
a passport	Ss: a passport
a bus	Ss: a bus
a taxi	Ss: a taxi

(Emphasize the difference between the vowel sounds of these two words, "bus" and "taxi," because both these two words are English loan-words in the Japanese language – "basu" for "bus" and "takushi" for "taxi" – and the underlined vowel sounds are pronounced in exactly the same way, which often confuse Japanese students when they pronounce these English words.)

a bus driver	Ss: a bus driver
(some) (much) money	Ss: (some) (much) money
a number	Ss: a number

Good. Now, I want you to find a partner and have some short conversations. I'm going to show you how to do it. I need a volunteer. (T chooses a student.)

OK. I'm going to ask you "What do you have to do?" Then, you are going to answer what you have to do using a word in the list. OK? Ready?

T: What do you have to do?

S1: I have to cash my traveler's check.

T: Good. Then, you ask me the same question.

S1: What do you have to do?

T: I have to go to the bank to get some money.

T: OK. Now, find your partner and ask each other the question. You take turns. You may use more than one word in the list when you answer the question.

(Ss are not yet able to engage in extended conversations in English. Therefore, at this time, especially when they are learning sounds which are difficult for them to pronounce, it may be more effective for them to try out relatively short conversations.)

### ***Grammar Practice***

#### **A. Inductive Generalization – statements using “will”**

(Be sure the board is clean.)

T: In the dialogue on page 3 of the handout, Kenji cashes his traveler's check for fifty dollars, but why do you think he cashes his traveler's check? Why does he need cash?

S2: Buy something at a supermarket. Some places don't take traveler's checks.

T: OK. Good. He probably want to buy something. Do you think Kenji is going to buy some food at a supermarket?

Ss: Yes. / Maybe. / I think so.

T: OK. Kenji is going to buy some food.

(Write this statement on the left of the board and label it #1.) Repeat after me.

Kenji is going to buy some food.

Ss: Kenji is going to buy some food.

Kenji is going to buy some food.

Ss: Kenji is going to buy some food.

When is he going to buy some food?

Right now or in the future?

Ss: In the future.

That's right. OK. Now, repeat after me.

Kenji will buy some food.

Ss: Kenji will buy some food.

(Write this statement on the board directly below the previous sentence and label it #2)

Kenji will buy some food.

Ss: Kenji will buy some food.

Is Kenji buying food right now.

Ss: No.

Is he going to buy food later?

Ss: Yes.

Yes. He will buy some food later.

Please repeat after me.

Kenji will buy some food later.

Kenji will buy some food later.

Ss: Kenji will buy some food later.

Ss: Kenji will buy some food later.

Good. (Go to the board now and draw vertical lines through the two sentences to highlight the change that takes place when one goes from the “to be going to” expression to the “will” expression.

(on the board)

#1	Kenji	is going to	buy some food.
----	-------	-------------	----------------

#2	Kenji	will	buy some food.
----	-------	------	----------------

### B. Inductive Generalization – questions using “will”

T: Please repeat after me.

Is Kenji going to buy some food?

(Write this sentence in the right of the board and label it #3.)

Is Kenji going to buy some food?

And what is the answer?

OK. Repeat after me.

Will Kenji buy some food?

(Write this sentence below #3 and label it #4.)

Will Kenji buy some food?

Ss: Is Kenji going to buy some food?

Ss: Is Kenji going to buy some food?

Ss: Yes.

Ss: Will Kenji buy some food?

Ss: Will Kenji buy some food?

(Pointing to #3) Is this a question about the future?

Ss: Yes.

(Pointing to #4) Is this a question about the future?

Ss: Yes. / Hmmm.

Yes. Both are questions about the future.

(Draw three vertical lines through #3 and #4 to highlight the change that takes place when one goes from questions using “to be going to” to questions using “will.”)

(on the board)

#3	Is	Kenji	going to	buy some food?
----	----	-------	----------	----------------

#4	Will	Kenji		buy some food?
----	------	-------	--	----------------

### C. Recognition Drill

T: I’m going to say a sentence. If it is like sentence #1 (Point to sentence #1 on the board), say “one.”

If it is like sentence #2 (Point to sentence #2 on the board), say “two,” OK? Let’s try it once.

I’m going to buy an orange.

Ss: one

I will buy an orange.

Ss: two

Good. Let’s do a few more.

John is going to the bank this afternoon.

Ss: one

Kenji will cash his traveler’s check.

Ss: two

Kenji and John will take a bus to the supermarket.

Ss: two

S1 is going to visit America in the summer.

Ss: one

S2 will get change for a dollar bill.

Ss: two

The bank teller is going to ask S3 for her passport. Ss: one

Good. Now, I will say a sentence using "will," and you tell me if it is a statement or a question (Indicate sentences #2 and #4 on the board). If it is a statement, say "statement." If it is a question, say "question." OK? Let's try it.

I will go to the bank. (Answer with Ss.) Ss: statement

Will you go to the bank? Ss: question

Good. Now, let's try some more.

S4 will put his signature on his traveler's check. Ss: statement

Will you need to change a dollar bill? Ss: question

Will you need coins to take a bus? Ss: question

I will use two quarters to make a phone call. Ss: statement

Good.

#### D. Comprehension

T: I will say a sentence, and you will tell me if it tells about "now" or "later." For example, if I say "I'm cashing my traveler's check, you say "now." If I say "I will cash my traveler's check, you say "later." OK? Let's try it.

Kenji is writing his signature on a traveler's check. Ss: now

Kenji will give his passport to the bank teller. Ss: later

He is giving the money to the bus driver. Ss: now

S6 will study English in Colorado. Ss: later

S7 is at a supermarket. Ss: now

S8 will be at a supermarket. Ss: later

Good.

#### E. Production – Communicative

T: Now, I want you to think of one thing that you will do in America this summer. Let's think about them for a few minutes. You may write them down if you want to. (T gives Ss a few minutes to think of their ideas.)

OK. Do you have your ideas now? Let's see. What will you do in America this summer, S8?

S8: I will study English hard.

T: Good. OK. What will you do in America this summer, S7?

S7: I will visit a friend of mine.

T: Good. What will you do in America this summer, S6?

S6: I will cash my traveler's checks.

T: Good. What will you do in America this summer, S5?

S5: I will stay with an American family.

T: Good. (T calls on all the eight students. Correct grammar if necessary.)

### ***Communicative Activity***

#### **A. Role-play**

T: So far we have talked about American money, practiced a dialogue and listened to a student's journal. Do you want to practice more what you may have to say at a bank, maybe?

Ss: Yes. / Maybe.

S4: I can use traveler's check at store. I don't have to go to bank.

T: True. But, having some cash with you is important sometimes. What if the store you go to didn't accept your traveler's checks? What if you forgot to take your I.D. with you to the store? What if you had only large traveler's checks and they didn't have change? Maybe, you should have some of your traveler's checks cashed and have small bills with you. What do you think? You want to do more practice now?

Ss: Yes. / All right. All right.

T: Good. OK. We have already looked at a conversation between a customer and a bank teller. So, I hope you have some idea on how it goes. But, before we start a conversation, let's look at page 4 of the handout. This is just an example of a conversation. Let's fill in the blanks together. (Since Ss have learned the auxiliary "will," it is added in the dialogue.)

(Go over the example with Ss. Tell them the conversation does not have to be exactly the same as this one. Tell them, for example, that the word "passport" can be some other words, or that the amount of money and the kind or number of bills the customer get can be different, or that the customer can ask for coins he or she might need. This dialogue for completion section may be too mechanical and repetitive. However, it can be helpful for low-intermediate students like the students in this situation because they are not really accustomed to free and extended conversations and may gain self-confidence by learning some fixed expressions to some extent.)

OK. Do you have any questions? (Ss may or may not ask questions. If Ss ask questions, try to have other students answer them.)

Get with a partner now. One of you will be a customer and the other will be a bank teller. Take turns and switch roles. Here, I have lots of real coins and traveler's checks and bills I made. See? Use them when you are having a conversation, OK? Write down whatever is necessary on your traveler's checks. (Give each group the coins, bills, and traveler's checks.) And use something, like your notebook or your student card, for your I.D. Let's get started. If you need help or have a question, please ask me. (Give Ss about 10 minutes. If time allows, let Ss do their role-play at the front of the class. T should monitor the role-play and give Ss assistance if/when they need it or request it. But T should have a minimal role in this activity. If time runs short, have Ss write a

dialogue of a conversation as homework, and these can be presented at the beginning of the next class session.)

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Appendix

Handout (page 1)

1. \_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_



7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

\$50	INTERNATIONAL BANK, INC.	\$50
	<i>Kenji Kurata</i>	56-08
		(date)
		(city)
Pay to _____		
\$50		\$50

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1. Where did Kenji go with John?
2. For how much did Kenji cash his traveler's check?
3. What name did Kenji write on Line 3?
4. What did Kenji write on Line 1 and Line 5?
5. What did Kenji give to the bank teller?
6. Did the bank teller give Kenji's passport back to him?
7. Did the bank teller give Kenji's traveler's check back to him?
8. What is another name for a "dollar?"
9. How much did Kenji pay to take a bus?
10. How many quarters did Kenji give to the bus driver?

Dialogue

Bank Teller: May I help you?  
Kenji: I'd like to cash a traveler's check.  
Bank Teller: Certainly. For how much?  
Bank Teller: All right. But I need your passport.  
Kenji: Here you are.  
Bank Teller: Thank you. How do you want it?  
Kenji: I'd like a twenty, two tens, a five, and five ones.  
Bank Teller: Right. Here you are. Have a nice day.  
Kenji: You too.

---

a traveler's check

a bank

a bank teller

a passport

a bus

a taxi

a bus driver

(some) (much) money

a number

Bank Teller: May I \_\_\_\_\_ you?

Customer: I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ a traveler's check.

Bank Teller: Certainly. \_\_\_\_\_ How much?

Customer: \_\_\_\_\_ dollars.

Bank Teller: All right. But I will need your \_\_\_\_\_.

Customer: Here you \_\_\_\_\_.

Bank Teller: Thank you. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you want it?

Customer: I'd like \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_.

Bank Teller: Right. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ a nice day.

Customer: \_\_\_\_\_ too.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

<b>\$ 50</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL BANK</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>
<u><i>Kenji Kusaba</i></u>		<u>56-08</u>
		<u>August 10, 2000</u> (date)
		<u>San Francisco</u> (city)
<b>Pay to</b>	<u><b>CASH</b></u>	
	<u><i>Kenji Kusaba</i></u>	
<b>\$ 50</b>		<b>\$ 50</b>