

*How can We Encourage Students to “Interact” and “Produce” in English
Classes?:
Voices of Japanese EFL Teachers*

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Abstract

The newly revised Course of Study for high school English education in Japan (MEXT, 2018) demonstrates the importance of fostering students’ productive skills. Students will be expected to “interact” and “produce” in English by engaging in a variety of oral communication activities such as speech, presentation, debate and discussion. However, as great emphasis has long been placed on receptive skills in Japanese English education, the majority of high school EFL teachers lack experience in employing such oral communication activities (Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute, 2016). This qualitative study, therefore, aimed to investigate the teaching strategies utilized and explored by Japanese EFL teachers who have experience in teaching EFL courses focusing on such activities (e.g., presentation, discussion). In particular, it attempted to examine the difficulties they encountered and the strategies they used and explored in encouraging their students to “interact” and “produce” in English through such activities. In order to collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five Japanese EFL teachers. Findings indicated that several serious obstacles tend to exist when implementing such activities in Japanese EFL context, including students’ silence, speech anxiety, low motivation to speak English, unequal participation, and poor achievement. In order to overcome such obstacles and support students’ learning, it was suggested that building rapport with students, praising students’ efforts to communicate through English, designing activities flexibly, and providing clear learning goals and instructions were considered particularly crucial among the strategies shared as they help promote students’ engagement in oral communication.

Keywords: teaching experience, oral production, student interaction, Japan, EFL

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Introduction

Active Learning (AL), currently described as “independent, dialogical, and deep learning,” has become one of the key phrases of today’s educational reform movement in Japan (Matsushita, 2018). AL refers to “all kinds of learning beyond the mere one-way transmission of knowledge in lecture-style classes (=passive learning)” and it “requires engagement in activities (writing, discussion, and presentation) and externalizing cognitive processes in the activities” (Mizokami, 2014, 2018). In other words, students are expected to do more than just listening to a lecture and acquiring knowledge in class; they are encouraged to participate in activities involving production, interaction and communication (e.g., writing, discussion, presentation), using their learned knowledge and externalizing cognitive processes through such activities. In Japan, the ideas and methods of AL began to gain attention in the context of higher education at the beginning of 2000s (Matsushita, 2018). As a result of the increase in university enrollment rate and growing learner diversity on campus, university needed to consider not just how to “[equip] the students with knowledge” but how to “[train] them in a wide variety of competencies” in order to address an issue of how to ensure learning quality for diverse body of students with different academic abilities and learning motivation (Mori, 2018). Accompanied by this changing role and expectation of higher education, one-way, lecture-style classes traditionally existed in university-level education were called into question and AL began to spread widely in higher education as a recommended educational policy, particularly since 2012 when the ideas and methods of AL were proposed in a report named *Towards a Qualitative Transformation of University Education for Building a New Future* released by the Central Council for Education (Central Council for Education, 2012), the advisory body of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

This new form of learning, as opposed to “passive learning,” is not confined to higher education today. In 2014 AL was also introduced to elementary and secondary education policies and, in 2018, MEXT announced the newly revised Courses of Study (the broad teaching standards and guidelines) for high school, which require implementation of AL (i.e., independent, dialogical, and deep learning) in all subjects, demonstrating the importance of cultivating students’ critical thinking, judgment and self-expression skills (MEXT, 2018).

Under this new policy incorporating AL, which is set to begin in 2022, some major changes are made in high school English subjects as well. One of them is the categorization of language skills. Instead of the four language skills listed in the previous guidelines (i.e., listening, reading, speaking, writing), there are five language skills based on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (i.e., listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, writing) as speaking skills are now divided into “spoken interaction” and “spoken production” to make the learning objectives and contexts for speaking more specific and clear. In addition, on the basis of these five language skills, one of the newly established courses officially starting in 2022 (“Logic and Expression”) will place great emphasis on fostering students’ interactive and productive skills in English. Fostering such skills has been traditionally less prioritized in Japanese high school English education. However, with the upcoming changes to the college entrance exams which assess not only receptive skills but also productive skills, high school students in Japan will be highly

expected to “interact” and “produce” in English classes by participating in a variety of oral communication activities, including, but not limited to, speech, presentation, debate and discussion. Students’ active participation in activities involving spoken interaction and spoken production is the key element of this new revision and high school EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers are now expected to prepare for this change.

However, most high school EFL teachers seem to be struggling to meet this new expectation today largely due to their prior learning experiences and teaching practices. As Borg (2003) claimed, teachers’ classroom practices or teaching beliefs are largely affected by their own learning experiences in school. In other words, they tend to teach the way they were taught by their teachers. Since Japanese English education has long focused on developing students’ receptive skills, most teachers in Japan did not have much experience of studying through oral communication activities such as presentation or debate when they were in school. As Nagamine (2017) claimed, “the lack of authentic in-class experiences” of such activities during their school days makes it difficult for most teachers to shift their teaching focus. In addition, the majority of them lack experience of teaching through such activities as they have been more expected to prioritize teaching grammar, vocabulary and reading until quite recently in order to prepare their students to succeed in the college entrance exams. The survey on 2134 Japanese high school EFL teachers (Benesse Educational Research and Development, 2016) revealed that while over 90% of the teachers considered students’ involvement with interaction and production crucial in English classroom, only a small number of them have employed such activities as speech, presentation, debate and discussion. The survey also showed that the majority of the teachers felt the need to learn more about how to teach speaking. Under these circumstances, most teachers seem to lack readiness to change their ways of teaching (Nagamine, 2017) and struggle to incorporate activities involving spoken interaction and spoken production in their classes. Therefore, there seems to be a huge gap between what has been proposed in the new Courses of Study and what high school EFL teachers are facing in their classrooms today.

The present study, therefore, aims to investigate the teaching strategies utilized and explored by Japanese EFL teachers who have relatively rich experiences of teaching EFL courses focusing on oral communication activities such as speech, presentation, debate and discussion. In particular, it attempts to examine the difficulties they experienced and the strategies they explored in encouraging their students to “interact” and “produce” in English through such activities.

Research Questions

The main research questions to be addressed in this paper are as follows:

1. What benefits and difficulties are experienced by Japanese EFL teachers in engaging students in activities involving spoken interaction and spoken production in Japanese EFL classes?
2. What are the teaching strategies employed and explored by them in encouraging students to interact and produce in English?

Methodology

Participants

As AL has been implemented in higher education more widely than in high school settings, university EFL teachers were mainly recruited to participate in this study to address the research questions. They were selected based on the following criteria: (a) the teachers were native speakers of Japanese and (b) the teachers had relatively rich experiences of teaching EFL courses focusing on activities involving spoken interaction and spoken production. A total of five Japanese university EFL teachers who fulfilled the criteria participated in this study. All of them had relatively rich experiences of teaching a variety of EFL courses focusing on spoken interaction and spoken production. In particular, they have taught EFL courses focusing on presentation, debate and discussion many times. Additionally, all of them employed various speaking activities quite frequently in class.

Table 1. Participants' profiles

Participants	Teaching experience	EFL courses they have mainly taught	In-class activities they often conduct
Teacher A	10 years	Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing, Academic English, English conversation, TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, Debate, Discussion	Think in pairs or groups, Student-led discussion, Group project, Presentation
Teacher B	5 years	Reading, Listening, Writing, English for tourism, PBL (mainly includes: Presentation, Debate, Discussion)	Read aloud in groups, TOEFL style speaking practice, Group project, Presentation
Teacher C	3 years	Reading, Listening, Writing, CALL, PBL (mainly includes: Presentation, Debate, Discussion)	Teach in pairs or groups, Peer feedback, Group project, Presentation
Teacher D	5 years	Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing, English conversation, ESP, PBL (mainly includes: Presentation, Debate, Discussion)	Think in pairs or groups, Reproduction, Presentation, Group project
Teacher E	10 years	TOEFL, TOEIC, Essay writing, Debate	Think and/or teach in pairs or groups, Speak on reading materials, Reproduction, Group project, Presentation

(Notes: PBL refers to “project-based learning”)

Instruments

In order to answer the research questions, semi-structured interviews were carried out with five Japanese university EFL teachers. There were nine interview questions in total and they were broadly divided into three sections. The first section (Q1-Q3) asked about the participants' teaching background (i.e., teaching experience, EFL

courses they have mainly taught, activities they often conduct in class). The participants' responses are summarized in Table 1. The second section (Q4-Q6) dealt with the participants' teaching experiences of spoken interaction, "a joint, here-and-now social activity which is governed by two main principles"—"speakers take turns" and "speakers cooperate" (Stenstrom, 1990). Spoken interaction involves at least two people speaking and responding to each other, for example in conversations or discussion. Since all of the participants had relatively rich experiences of teaching EFL courses incorporating discussion, debate and group project, they were mainly asked to talk about these courses, including the benefits and difficulties they experienced and the teaching strategies they employed. Lastly, the third section (Q7-Q9) asked about the participants' teaching experiences of spoken production, which, unlike spoken interaction, usually involves one person providing information, describing something, or giving opinion in public. The examples of spoken production activity include making a presentation to an audience. As all of the participants taught EFL courses focusing on English presentation tasks, they were mainly asked to describe the benefits and difficulties they experienced in teaching these courses and how they attempted to overcome teaching difficulties (i.e., strategies).

Data collection

In order to collect data, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted during June and July 2018 at the participants' workplaces. Prior to the interviews, the participants were informed about the aim and the methods of the study, including recording their interviews, as well as their right to withdraw from the study at any time. They were also reassured that confidentiality of their responses obtained during the interviews would be guaranteed and their identities would not be revealed. All of the participants signed informed consent which would allow the researcher to record their interviews and to use the data for the study. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 80 minutes in length; they were all recorded with both a digital video camera and a digital voice recorder to ensure that all data are obtained. The interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, Japanese; the recorded data were later transcribed and translated into English.

Data Analysis

The qualitative content analysis was carried out in order to analyze the interview data. For the purpose of analyzing the data efficiently NVivo 11 software was used. After the interview data were all entered, the participants' responses were carefully read multiple times by paying attention to the frequently emerging words, expressions, and ideas. The codes and categories generated through analysis were examined multiple times in order to clearly identify patterns and common themes regarding the research questions.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the findings obtained from the interviews, the research questions are discussed below. Illustrated with some excerpts from their responses, the participants' teaching experiences of spoken interaction (e.g., discussion, debate, group project) and spoken production (e.g., presentation) are described, first focusing on benefits, followed by specific difficulties encountered by them. Then, the teaching

strategies explored by the participants in facilitating student interaction and production are discussed.

1. What benefits and difficulties are experienced by Japanese EFL teachers in engaging students in activities involving spoken interaction and spoken production in Japanese EFL classes?

Common benefits

Based on the analysis, three common benefits were identified regarding students' engagement in activities involving spoken interaction and spoken production. First, students can take initiatives in learning more when they are given opportunities to discuss, present or take part in a group project, rather than just listening to a lecture. For example, Teacher E explained, "Activities involving students' interaction and production can affect students' learning attitudes positively. It is a good opportunity for them to stop being 'passive' and start to become an 'active' and 'independent' learner."

Second, students can also find joy and develop interests in learning when they are actively engaged in such activities. For example, Teacher A talked about one of her classes in which she implemented student-led discussion activities every week. In the class evaluation survey conducted on the last day, she found a number of positive comments about the class. She said,

Most students wrote, 'I enjoyed thinking about topics' or 'Joining a discussion was a lot of fun.' And I felt, 'it's because they were the ones doing all the work!'...To be motivated to learn something, we need to have 'fun' one way or another and I think 'doing' is the key. If it's not fun, it'd be difficult to continue learning. (Teacher A)

Here we can see her positive perception of student active engagement in learning as she realized through her experience that it can affect student learning motivation positively.

Third, students can also learn a lot from each other, not just from their teacher, through these activities. For instance, Teacher C often employs small group activities in which students give feedback or teach an assigned part to each other. Recalling such activities, he said, "Rather than just studying by themselves or asking questions to a teacher, students can improve their abilities by interacting this way...I heard 'Teaching is the best way of learning' somewhere, and I think it's quite true." Other participants also described similar benefits in having students work together. Though a large portion of a lesson was long spent on teachers' lecture in Japan, the participants' responses suggested that students' collaborative learning leads to deep learning.

Difficulties: Spoken Interaction

Despite numerous benefits, the data analysis revealed three critical difficulties associated with activities involving spoken interaction (e.g., pair work, group work, group discussion, group project) in English classes: a) students' silence, b) unequal participation, and c) poor achievement.

a) Students' silence

In line with past research (King, 2013), the participants often faced issues related to students' silence when trying to have students engage in interactive activities in English. For example, Teacher A said, "Especially for the first few weeks a whole class often falls into complete silence during pair or group activities." As other participants shared similar episodes, classroom tends to be filled with silence in English classes in Japan when students are told to interact in English, often with no one initiating a conversation. Moreover, some participants said it is not uncommon that some class remain silent for the entire semester.

b) Unequal participation

Another problem frequently shared by the participants was about contribution in group work. When students were assigned to work together as a group to do a discussion or a project in English, the participants often saw unequal participation among students. For example, Teacher B often faced this issue in her project-based learning (PBL) classes in which students were assigned to work in a group project throughout a semester. She said,

It was clear that students with good command of English didn't like this class. They had a lot of complains like 'if I could work alone, I could do better.' Because some low proficient students always depended on them...I think it demotivated them. When employing group work we need to think about this problem. (Teacher B)

As also reported in Mori (2018), the presence of free riders in group work has been one of the major issues in recent implementation of AL. As Teacher B indicated, it not only affects their final group product but also negatively influences other members' learning motivation

c) Poor achievement

The participants also shared concerns about the quality of learning outcome of group work. Even when students were given excessive time to work together as a group, the participants often found that learning outcomes of group work turned out to be superficial—not deep enough. Many of them also found that some groups' final products were poorly integrated. Teacher E, recalling the time when he gave a group presentation task, said, "A group which ended up performing poorly...seemed to gather individual work for the first time on the presentation day. Their statement was not consistent at all." As he described, while students seem to work cooperatively—equally splitting their work at the beginning and being responsible for their own part, there are cases in which they fail to complete their work as a group.

Difficulties: Spoken Production

The interview data also revealed two major difficulties associated with activities involving spoken production (e.g., speech, presentation): d) speech anxiety and e) low motivation to speak English.

d) Speech anxiety

When asked about their experiences of implementing activities involving spoken production, every participant described issues related to students' speech anxiety, strong fear of speaking in public. Teacher C talked about a specific student who, despite her good reading and writing skills, always became extremely nervous in presentation tasks. He said, "While some students enjoyed presenting, she always stopped and cried in the middle of a presentation. Standing in front of a class, she said she couldn't remember what to say and panicked." As other participants also talked about similar cases, it is not uncommon to see students like her in Japanese EFL classroom; in fact, many Japanese students tend to have difficulties with speaking English in front of their classmates (Brooks & Wilson, 2014).

Also, some participants talked about students who had "Taijin Kyofusho," a type of social anxiety which has been long documented and prevalent in Japan. For example, Teacher D said, "The biggest problem I've had with student presentation was students with Taijin Kyofusho. Such students usually never show up on a presentation day." Research showed that people who have this anxiety have strong fear of embarrassing or offending others with their body or behavior (Essau, Sasagawa, Ishikawa, Okajima, O'Callaghan, & Bray, 2011). For students with this anxiety, a presentation task in which they need to face the whole class must be an intimidating and frightening experience.

e) Low motivation to speak English

The other issue frequently emerged was about students' motivation to speak English. The participants said that there is clearly a group of students almost in every class who like traditional, lecture-style classes better. Teacher D faced difficulty in motivating such students: "Some students want to have a lecture on grammar instead of a presentation task...Some get quite bothered by this type of task...Increasing students' motivation to present is important, but it's very difficult." The participants also found that some students are good at English but not comfortable with speaking English. Teacher A described one situation where she assigned students to work on interactive presentations in which audience were allowed to jump in and ask questions to presenters: "In one of the classes, the presentation contents were quite interesting, but the performance lacked enthusiasm. The presenters talked without intonation and the audience remained silent." She explained that the students usually worked hard, but somehow became less enthusiastic when it came to a speaking task. In spoken production, all participants highlighted the importance of considering the diversity of students' preference of learning style and increasing students' motivation to speak English.

As summarized in this section, we can see that in activities involving spoken interaction and spoken production in English classes, Japanese students seem to be having issues with "participation" in the first place as some remain silent, some do not show up, some rely on others and some do not work enthusiastically. Such situations would clearly lead to the lack of students' experience of externalizing knowledge. It is not exaggerating to state that without attempting to address the difficulties explained above students would not be able to achieve anything but mere knowledge acquisition.

2. What are the teaching strategies employed and explored by them in encouraging students to interact and produce in English?

Common Strategies

The data analysis revealed two main strategies commonly observed in facilitating student interaction and production. One was to build rapport with students. As described earlier, Japanese students generally lack experience of studying through oral communication activities, and there also tend to exist a wide range of abilities, learning motivation and styles in a same class. In order to help students feel comfortable with speaking and motivated to interact and produce in English, therefore, it is crucial that teachers design activities, considering students' learning experiences, abilities and attitudes. For this purpose, all participants underscored the importance of learning about each individual through everyday lesson (e.g., observing student behavior, interacting with them, conducting a classroom survey) and building rapport with them so that they can reflect student interests and needs in designing activities. To this end, Teacher D said that she often adopts a conference-style desk arrangement, which enables her to observe and interact with her students more easily.

The other was to praise students whenever they try to communicate through English. The participants frequently mentioned that Japanese students tend to be too worried about grammatical accuracy when using English, preventing them from speaking and resulting in lack of practice. For such Japanese students, they found "praise" crucial as it helps build students' confidence to use English without fear. Teacher A said, "Because students fear making mistakes...especially for the first few weeks, it's important to show that they're not evaluated based on accuracy. So I focus on praising them not for being accurate but for their effort to communicate through English." The participants were confident that praising every single effort students make to use English makes a big difference in creating a supportive learning atmosphere.

Strategies: Spoken Interaction

The interview results revealed four major teaching strategies for specifically addressing issues with spoken interaction: a) provide clear instructions, b) provide clear learning objectives, c) evaluate individual contribution and d) provide sufficient time for knowledge acquisition.

a) Provide clear instructions

Particularly addressing an issue of students' silence, one effective strategy was suggested especially by Teachers A, C and D: to provide clear instructions on how to participate in discussion in English. By so doing they attempted to help build students' confidence to interact and increase their readiness to participate in English discussion. Teacher A said,

Students are shy and don't know how to take turns in English first. So I go in to each group and "control" their conversation by asking each student an easy question and helping students respond to each other. After every student spoke, I say, 'This is how you do it, do it!' and then I go to the next group. (Teacher A)

We can see that she intends to show her students how to take turns by actually joining their conversation. She further added that before she intervenes students are usually very silent; but after she shows how by actually controlling their conversation, most students immediately start to speak more to each other. As Yanagi and Baker (2016) stated, Japanese students do not have enough opportunities to practice English discussion in schools and are “likely unaware of how to successfully take turns in English.” It is therefore possible that many Japanese students tend to become silent and passive in English discussion because they do not know how to join in a discussion in English. As the attempt made by Teacher A, “showing how” not just with words but with action should be effective in this sense and adopting this strategy at the beginning of the semester should be particularly crucial in order to successfully help students get used to joining discussion in English.

b) Provide clear learning objectives

Regarding issues with unequal participation in group work, two strategies were mainly identified. One was to provide a clear explanation of learning objectives along with a meaning of group work when introducing a task. As reinforced by most participants, students’ lack of participation or reliance on group members are largely due to their lack of understanding of a learning objective or a significance of group work for achieving it. Though it may sound quite simple, lack of these explanations may lead to poor learning outcome as Teacher D said, “In the past some failed to do well...I didn’t explain enough...Now I make sure to explain not only a goal but also how and why I want them to achieve it.” Other participants also said that giving clear explanations had positive influence on changing students’ attitudes in group work.

c) Evaluate individual contribution

Another strategy suggested on unequal participation was to establish a system to evaluate individual contribution. In employing group work, the participants highlighted the importance of establishing a sense of responsibility and increasing students’ motivation to contribute to group work. In particular, they considered student involvement in evaluation process (=peer-assessment) crucial. Some participants, for example, distributed a group contribution sheet to each student when introducing a group project. Students were told that at the end of the project their individual contribution would be evaluated by their group members using this sheet and that the evaluation scores and comments given by group members would be part of their final grades. Knowing how their individual work would be evaluated at the beginning, they said that students took group work more seriously and positively than before. With each student equally provided with an opportunity to consider and explain each other’s work, implementation of peer-assessment seems to help reduce the act of free-riding in group work as also indicated by past research (Brooks & Ammons, 2003; Hall & Buzwell, 2012).

d) Provide sufficient time for knowledge acquisition

One important strategy particularly regarding poor achievement of group work emerged from the participants’ responses. It was to consider a balance between student activity engagement and knowledge acquisition. As Teacher E repeatedly pointed out, if students lack knowledge on a topic, it would be extremely difficult for them to think deeply in the first place, let alone achieving higher level of learning. This point was also clarified by Matsushita (2018). She stated, “in order to have the students engage in higher-order thinking, they must acquire knowledge (content)

appropriate for such thinking.” Mori (2018) also argued that without sufficient internalization of the content that students are expected to externalize, “a gap develops between thought and action.” Considering this issue, Teacher E claimed that before judging students’ achievement as superficial or not deep enough, we must make sure to provide enough time for students to acquire knowledge necessary for working on an assignment. Other participants also expressed similar concerns and, to ensure the time for students to acquire knowledge, they were all adopting flipped learning approach, which can “circumvent the gap between thought and action (Mori, 2018), in one way or another.

Strategies: Spoken Production

The data analysis identified two major teaching strategies for addressing issues with spoken production: e) give ample opportunities to present in English and f) provide alternative forms of performance.

e) Give ample opportunities to present in English

Particularly regarding students with speech anxiety, one common strategy was practiced and suggested by all participants: to provide ample opportunities to present in English. Their strategies are in line with King (2002), in which she stated that students’ nervousness to speak in public is often due to their lack of experience. Enough practice in classroom, therefore, should help build their confidence to present in class as past studies on English oral presentations reported similar outcomes (Fujita, Yamagata, & Takenaka, 2009).

f) Provide alternative forms of performance

Another strategy emerged from the analysis was to provide alternative forms of performance to a traditional, class-fronted presentation. During the interviews, the participants described students’ speech anxiety or low motivation to speak English mainly in a class-fronted presentation task where students give a presentation one at a time to the whole class. For students with speech anxiety or low motivation to speak English, this presentation style can be intimidating and overwhelming. Therefore, giving ample presentation opportunities is not the only thing we should consider when employing a presentation task as Teacher D said,

When we hear a word ‘presenting,’ we tend to think of class-fronted presentations using PowerPoint slides. But in order to express our ideas or opinions, we don’t always need to speak to the whole class, using slides. There are many other forms of presentation through which students can express themselves. (Teacher D)

Here she emphasized the importance of providing many “forms” for a presentation task. Considering learner diversity, she further added that any form of performance should be allowed as long as students can engage in communicating their ideas and suggested that we should design presentation activity more flexibly. For example, in teaching one of the low-level classes, Teacher D adopted YouTube filmmaking in which students presented and recorded their research findings using their smartphones outside of class and shared the recorded videos later in class. She said that the students seemed to enjoy this presentation task. Other participants also reported the effectiveness of poster presentation which enables students to present multiple times

to a small group of audience and helps reduce their speech anxiety (Prichard & Ferreira, 2014).

Conclusion

Addressing the current issues surrounding the new educational policies of Japanese high school English education, this study aimed to investigate the teaching strategies explored by Japanese EFL teachers in encouraging students to interact and produce in English through oral communication activities. Based on the analysis, we found five major difficulties, most of which were associated with students' lack of involvement in activities (e.g., silence, unequal participation, speech anxiety). In order to address this issue in Japanese EFL context, a total of eight strategies (e.g., build rapport with students, praise, provide clear instructions, provide alternative forms of performance), mainly aiming to create a supportive learning environment for students to participate, were found to be particularly important. Lack of student activity engagement would lead to lack of their experience in externalizing cognitive processes, making it difficult for them to achieve more than knowledge acquisition. It is therefore crucial that teachers understand the principles of AL and create a supportive learning atmosphere in class where students can feel safe and motivated to interact and produce in English.

Lastly, though this study aimed to explore the teaching strategies for student engagement in spoken interaction and spoken production, several limitations should be noted. First, as the instrument of this study was limited to semi-structured interviews, other types of instruments, including classroom observations, should be included in order to learn more about how to encourage students to interact and produce in Japanese EFL context. Second, since the participants were all university teachers this time, the future study should also examine this topic in high school settings so as to consider practical suggestions for high school teachers more in depth.

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