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著者	KIRKWOLD, LORNE; LOMAS, DIANE; YONESAKA, SUZANNE
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ENGLISH USED IN FOREIGN MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES IN THE TOKYO REGION: A PILOT STUDY

L. Kirkwold, D. Lomas, S. Yonesaka

Abstract

The Department of American, British and Canadian Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at Hokkai Gakuen University anticipates that some future graduates may search for employment in international enterprises. In order to inform the curriculum-making process, the present pilot study investigates the English-language tasks performed in foreign-based multinational companies.

During the autumn of 1993, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a member of the personnel department and at least one other employee at nine foreign-based multinationals in the Tokyo region. In preparation for the interview, each participant completed a short questionnaire to determine which of 22 business tasks requiring English-language proficiency were performed, in the case of the member of the personnel department, in the company, or, in the case of the employee, in this individual's job.

The interviews given by the personnel representatives reflect the range of tasks requiring proficiency in English, official policies regarding the use of English, the role of English in hiring and promotions, the

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nature of the in-house foreign-language training provided by their companies, and future needs. The other employees were interviewed about the frequency and complexity of tasks performed, reflecting their actual needs. The interview also gathered information about the employees' English-education background (including instruction provided by the company), testing, and anticipated needs. Interviews were analyzed qualitatively by identifying common threads.

The results section of this paper presents a synopsis of the interviews. In the discussion section, the analysis concentrates on the following areas: (1) the four language skills; (2) specialized job-related knowledge; (3) the role of technology; (4) English as an international language; and (5) testing and career development. When appropriate, implications for EFL university curricula in Japan are discussed.

Keywords: *needs assessment; multinational companies; workplace EFL.*

Introduction

It is probable that future graduates of the Department of American, British, and Canadian Studies will enter careers making use of the English skills developed during their studies. In order to anticipate what skills may be required, the present needs analysis of prospective employers, has been conceived. In Robinson's (1991) discussion of a target situation analysis, she identifies Munby's (1978) processor as the most commonly cited approach. As an example of work consistent with this approach, Van Ek and Alexander's (1975) *Threshold Level English* has had a great influence throughout Europe as a framework to standardize foreign-language objectives in many countries. Premised on the assumption that minimal proficiency can be attained in 100-150 hours of study in up to a year's time, the specifications of this work are

intended to permit novice learners to respond in circumstances for which they have not been directly prepared. Van Ek and Alexander's contribution was substantive in the non-professional European context for which it was intended. However, given the purpose of the present study, the scope of their analysis is a limited one. More recently, ESP has additionally accorded a greater place in syllabus design to the type of tasks that learners will be expected to perform. Nunan (1989) for one has laid out how an analysis of tasks can provide direction for the framing of objectives.

In Japan, some institutions involved in curriculum renewal are analyzing tasks learners will actually encounter. Goodman and Ori-kasa (1993) of the Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages (KIFL) curriculum renewal group surveyed 20 employers of KIFL graduates to determine which workplace tasks are performed in English. Imai (1993), in a Monbusho report, presents an analysis of the kinds of tasks requiring English that are performed in companies employing college graduates. Her analysis provides a profile from the companies' perspective and from the college graduates' perspective.

The present pilot study targets for its needs analysis foreign-based multinational companies in the Tokyo area. This pilot study investigates the possible range of tasks performed in English in the workplace, from the simplest to the most difficult, and from the least-often to most-often performed. The results may be instructive as input for the curriculum decision-making process.

Subjects

Nine foreign-based multinationals in the Tokyo region agreed to participate, choosing one member of the personnel department and at

least one other employee. A brief description of each company is given below.

Co 1: Major global industrial equipment manufacturer. Headquarters in Switzerland with operations on every continent. Japan operations employ about 1,300. Interviewed: personnel representative and one employee.

Co 2: Major global producer of chemicals and metals, plastics, agricultural chemicals, pharmaceuticals and consumer products. Headquarters in the USA with industrial locations in over 35 countries and commercial locations in over 100 countries. Japan operations employ almost 1,500. Interviewed: personnel representative and one employee.

Co 3: Major global manufacturer of pharmaceuticals and chemicals. Headquarters in Switzerland with over 130 affiliates in 52 countries. Japan operations employ about 2,200. Interviewed: personnel representative and one employee.

Co 4: Major global manufacturer of pharmaceuticals and chemicals. Headquarters in the USA with 129 manufacturing locations in 38 countries and 34 R&D locations in 13 countries. Japan operations employ around 2,800. Interviewed: personnel representative and one employee.

Co 5: Major global manufacturer of pharmaceuticals and chemicals. Headquarters in Switzerland with affiliates in 55 countries. Japan operations employ around 1,600. Interviewed: personnel representative and two employees.

Co 6: Major multinational producer of computer, communications and office equipment. Headquarters in Italy with industrial and R&D locations in 11 countries and sales agents in 80 countries. Japan operations employ about 1,300. Interviewed: personnel

representative and three employees.

Co 7: Major global producer of audio-visual, communications, electronic and medical equipment. Headquarters are in Holland, with industrial and commercial locations in 60 countries. Japan operations employ about 640. Interviewed: personnel representative and one employee.

Co 8: Publishing subsidiary of a large multinational company with headquarters in the USA. Japan operations employ 14. Interviewed: personnel representative and one employee.

Co 9: Major global beverage producer. Headquarters in the USA with operations in 185 countries. Japan operations employ about 850. Interviewed: personnel representative and one employee.

Instrumentation

In preparation for the interview, each participant was mailed a short bilingual questionnaire (Appendix 1). The purpose of the personnel questionnaire was to elicit which of 22 business tasks requiring proficiency in English are performed in the company. The purpose of the employee's questionnaire was to determine how frequently s/he performs 22 tasks. However, because of the limited number of participants, the results were not analyzed quantitatively. Rather, the major value of this questionnaire was that it prepared the participants for the interview by encouraging them to reflect on the full range of tasks performed.

Approximately one week after mailing the questionnaires, we arrived in Tokyo to conduct and record semi-structured interviews (Appendix 2). Interviews were conducted in Japanese or English, according to the expressed preferences of the participants.

Personnel representatives were interviewed about the range of tasks requiring proficiency in English, official policies regarding the use of English, the role of English in hiring and making promotions, the nature of the in-house foreign-language training provided by their companies and future needs. The other employees were asked about their own needs with regard to English-language proficiency on the job and the complexity of tasks. The interviews also gathered information about how the employees had learned English, both formally and informally, and about any instruction or testing provided by the company. Interviews were recorded and analyzed qualitatively by identifying common threads.

Results

Company 1: Industrial equipment manufacturer

Personnel representative: Mr K

Officially, all employees of Co 1, an industrial equipment manufacturer, are required to be able to read and speak English, but the amount used actually depends on the department. Knowledge is expected for transfers abroad or promotions. Managers are expected to communicate to the top management, among them foreign nationals. From the management's perspective, the need for increased levels of ability in English is recognized.

The company entrance examination includes an in-house discrete-point test of English. During the term of employment, formal requirements are not specified for testing English, although depending on the manager, a TOEIC result could be important.

An internal business school provides intercultural training (ICT) courses at three levels, from beginners' to seniors'. The latter includes

business English with instruction for presenting, telephoning, traveling abroad, and writing reports and business letters. Special ICT courses may be given, depending on need and circumstances, for transfers abroad. Some employees also prepare in this school for TOEIC.

Multinational operations are decentralized, so this necessitates many channels among locations. The matrix structure multiplies the contacts. Consequently, there has been an increasing need for all employees to communicate in English. For example, they receive more international telephone calls than before.

Employee: Mr O

Manager of both personnel and communications, Mr O uses English in particular with the parent offices in Europe. He also attends international conferences. In Japan, he is directly responsible to the executives, among them the foreign president, and works daily with international employees. He provides liaison in English with embassies and bilingually for the press.

Mr O completed a BA in economics at the University of California at Berkeley and an MBA at Armstrong College. Prior studies included junior college and ESL instruction in the USA.

Returning to Tokyo, he began working for his current employer. He has used English regularly for long-range planning, financial analysis, coordinating with companies abroad, and licensing arrangements with foreign companies. Transferred to Connecticut for two years, his responsibilities included information-gathering and market research. Returning to Japan again, his duties in English have included research and marketing, divestment analysis, and import/export work. In the internal business school, he has taught presenting in both Japanese and English. For five years, he was manager for corporate communication

and public relations, and in April 1994, was promoted to Human Resources Management at the group level. Additionally, he has visited abroad, especially the USA.

As part of his application, Mr O submitted a cover letter and a C. V. in both languages. He then took a written test, including questions about grammar and vocabulary, and was interviewed by an American. Since then, he has not been tested. Mr O has received company courses specific to his job given in English in both management and communication, but nothing specifically intended as language training.

Mr O described three examples of tasks he performs in English. The first is producing a collection of brochures, including originals in both languages and translations. Working with an outside agency, Mr O supplies the technical expertise and oversees the translation and adaptation. The second is interpreting at press conferences. The third is making 30- to 60-minute presentations to the executives such as the communication department's annual strategy.

According to Mr O, ideal preparation for his position would be reading broadly and studying both languages with the focus of the English instruction being on writing well and speaking, with attention given to presentation techniques. Also, another recurring opinion was that cultural knowledge must be of sufficient breadth for successful communication.

Company 2: Chemicals

Personnel representative: Mr O

Mr O emphasizes that unlike at other foreign-based companies, English is the only authorized written language so that written fluency is required of all employees. With about 10 non-Japanese in the

company and about 13 Japanese stationed abroad, there is some need for spoken English as well.

Mr O feels that because the employees all use written English, their proficiency level is very high. English is also used at presentations and occasionally for interpreting for visiting management at press conferences.

Upon entering this company, recent graduates take Eiken Level 2. However, undue importance is not placed on the results as it is felt the employees will be able to make progress in English parallel to their needs at work. Conversely, an excellent knowledge of English is essential for older employees coming from other jobs. Co 2 does not consider hiring otherwise well-qualified applicants who lack English proficiency, as the management believes that Japanese over the age of about 30 have little hope of becoming “that good” in English. This can unfortunately result in an enormous loss for both Co 2 and the applicant.

All employees may join in-house English classes which have five to eight members and meet for 150 hours per year. Entry-level courses focus on conversation, higher-level courses on business English and CNN news. Written and spoken English progress tests (TOEIC and FSI) are given at the end of courses in order to place employees in the following year’s courses.

One challenge of the courses is maintaining enrollment, since the higher up in management employees are, the less free time they have. Enrollment has been raised to 65–70% through supervisor support and a new rule allowing enrollment the following year only for employees with 75% attendance. If employees are stationed abroad for more than three months, there is an intensive two-week course on survival skills, cross-cultural presentational skills, and an English brush-up.

Mr O says their target is 2 on the FSI and 600 on the TOEIC for all employees. The only other company that he knows of with such high standards is Co 9, which he mentions by name.

Employee: Mr S

Mr S works in the personnel section as a recruiter. His previous job had been in the exporting section of a Japanese company, so he had had some experience in writing and speaking English. Since he was interviewed at non-entry level, he also had an interview with a top manager, an Australian who spoke no Japanese. Since joining this company, Mr S has taken in-house English classes, which he admits are difficult. He complains that even though courses held on the premises are convenient, classes are often interrupted with messages or calls from clients.

Of all the tasks that Mr S performs, he says he reads and writes faxes the most often, adding that this is a common task throughout the entire workplace, along with writing English memos. Mr S says that although many employees feel that having to write English memos to other Japanese is a waste of time, he views it as English training.

Mr S also uses English through e-mail: since he does it all day long, writing e-mail messages is easy for him. Most of his written communication is modeled on letters in business textbooks or on previous e-mail. The most difficult task for him is speaking, especially because his job involves personnel interviews by phone, for which each nuance is crucial. To put his difficulties into perspective, Mr S reminds us that giving personnel interviews by telephone is a difficult task even in Japanese.

Company 3: Pharmaceuticals and chemicals

Personnel representatives: Mr T and Mr W

According to Mr W, this branch of Co 3, which deals mainly with Japanese hospitals, is not operating as an international company, and therefore has little need for English. However, English is used as the common language between Swiss staff and the Japanese employees, with the secretaries acting as mediators for employees who can't speak English. A higher level of English is necessary for the import-export and the R&D departments, and for higher level managers undertaking business trips abroad.

As for the range of tasks performed, Ms T judges that the three most important tasks performed by the employees are reading letters and faxes in English, writing reports in English, and using a typewriter or computer. She is confident that the employees could do these tasks well because they are used to them. However, she considers tasks requiring productive skills to be much more difficult, recognizing the inherent responsibility.

Prospective employees are tested on their general English ability. Special tests, consisting mainly of reading, writing and translation, are designed for candidates for secretarial positions and positions in the R&D department. The test is the main criterion for assessment although those who possess Eiken or have had experience abroad are at an advantage.

The company provides English training in the form of an in-house English conversation class, a writing class, and a correspondence course; all employees wishing to participate may do so. In addition, employees posted abroad undergo a two-week intensive language course prior to their departure.

Employee: Ms X

Ms X, a secretary in the personnel department, often uses English when communicating with the head office in Switzerland. When there are visitors from the head office, she also uses English.

Prior to joining Co 3, the employee studied English literature at a women's college and attended a private English conversation school. Immediately on entering Co 3, she was tested in reading and writing although there was no English training provided. At present, she is taking part in the writing class provided by the company, in which she uses materials from her job. She judges this class to be extremely useful because of its practical nature. In addition, she takes advantage of the correspondence course offered by the company.

She finds it particularly difficult to translate Japanese terms, such as 'yoroshiku onegai shimasu'. The simplest task for her is understanding faxes from abroad.

Ms X's advice to current undergraduate students would be to read as much as possible. In particular, she thought reading business letters would help them get used to the expressions often used in business correspondence. Being able to conduct small talk in English would also be good preparation for her kind of work.

Company 4: Pharmaceuticals and chemicals

Personnel: Mr Y

Co 4 neither serves foreign clients in Japan nor sends anyone to the head office on business, with the exception of language training. No international transactions take place in this company's Japanese operations. According to Mr Y, English isn't used within this company.

However, the secretaries and the section chiefs who have to maintain contact with the head office in New York, especially the

marketing department and central research department, are required to speak English. Non-managerial employees in both the marketing department and the New Product Development Center have similar needs.

In terms of tasks performed in English, reading is regarded as the most important. Spoken English is used by a limited number of employees. Phone calls from abroad are usually made to the same people. Spoken English is occasionally required by managerial-level employees for presentations. Secretaries working with the non-Japanese sent to Japan from the USA need to be able to speak and type English. Employees working on patent-related work ('intellectual property rights') need to be able to write English, as do top executive secretaries.

Upon entering, office clerks are tested on their English using a mark sheet test. Salespeople and R&D employees, on the other hand, are rarely tested. Designed by an outside recruitment firm, the test is equivalent to Eiken level 2.

Twice a year, employees can, and sometimes must, take the TOEIC test. Reasons for taking the test include 'self-development', but it appears to be one criterion for considering promotions as well as for part of the general assessment criteria.

Co 4 offers both regular and intensive English classes. The regular class (basic to intermediate) meets for 90 minutes each week with ten to fifteen people in each course section. The intensive class is much more practical, concentrating on writing, conversation, and preparation for English presentations, and has only two or three participants in each class.

The demand for English in this company was seen to be increasing in proportion to the increase in the number of foreign employees. One

explanation given was the globalization of the pharmaceutical industry; as a result, even though their business is conducted in Japan with Japanese clients in Japanese, the marketing strategies for this company still come from the R&D department in the USA in English.

Although there is a clear division between those that can speak English and those that cannot, English is no longer considered to be a special talent.

Employee: Ms M

Ms M, an employee in the personnel division, uses English with the non-Japanese employees within the company. Outside of the company, she has to use English with staff from consulting firms and when replying to applications from foreigners.

The employee's preparation included English classes at university and private lessons at Simul Academy. The university courses included grammar, conversation and reading; only the conversation courses, which were judged to be too overcrowded to be of any real value, were taught by native speakers (NSs) of English. She thought that the material used in the reading courses was too out-of-date and suggested the *Readers Digest*, novels such as those by Sydney Sheldon and Jeffrey Archer, and current news articles as more appropriate alternatives.

On applying to the company, Ms M had to sit a test which she likened to the university entrance exam; it consisted of reading comprehension, and wasn't particularly business-related. Since joining, she has also had to take the TOEIC test, and she is continuing her English education in the form of an in-house English class twice a week, the focus of which is only 'somewhat related' to this company's business.

A typical example of tasks performed in English would be inter-company or internal memos (between New York and Tokyo, or

between foreign employees and Japanese staff within the Tokyo office). The personnel hired in Japan can speak Japanese, but those hired in New York usually cannot. There are sometimes communication problems, so she has to act as a mediator too. She finds writing about “complicated matters” difficult, for example, foreign employee’s tax, but she confessed she would also find it difficult in Japanese.

If Ms M were to give advice to a current undergraduate regarding preparation for her job, she would emphasize learning reading and especially writing. She also recommended learning a skill in English as well as debating in English.

Company 5: Pharmaceuticals and chemicals

Personnel: Mr A

English is often used by employees involved in R&D and those people who have a planning function. Mr A estimates that between 50 and 70% of employees need English in their work. There is no need to communicate with foreign clients abroad; however, communication with visitors from abroad is in English. He claimed that cross-cultural skills are more important than English proficiency, adding that his company needed people with such skills.

English proficiency is only one area in which potential employees are evaluated; however, all are tested with a modified version of the TOEIC test, with the exception of medical sales representatives. Each department has its own additions to the test, depending on the job requirements, although they are now trying to standardize and use just one TOEIC-style test.

After entering the company, new employees have five days of group English lessons: they are related to the chemical industry. The company also sponsors employees to take the TOEIC exam. The

higher the employee's TOEIC score, the higher the chance of being posted abroad. Examinees with a score above 500 are prioritized and the company pays for all of their subsequent English training, which is related to the chemical industry. Prioritized candidates consist of three levels: priority 3 and priority 2 don't go abroad, whereas priority 1 do. The term is usually one year including a period of preparation in Japan. The period abroad includes a homestay and language training.

Speaking at business meetings, attending business meetings, and writing reports in English are regarded as the most important tasks that the employees have to perform. English was also deemed necessary for presentations. The importance of being able to use e-mail was also stressed. How well the employees can do the tasks depends on their section and the subject. All in all, the interviewee was not 100% satisfied with their performance.

With the increase in the globalization of the pharmaceutical industry, the need for English is definitely seen to be increasing. Communication and cooperation with the R&D departments based in Switzerland and the USA are of utmost importance.

Employee: Ms M

The interviewee, an employee in the corporate strategy unit, majored in Japanese literature at university. She also studied English at Berlitz Language School for nine months as an undergraduate, as there were no English courses at her college. Upon entering the company, she took a listening and reading test, which had been designed by an independent agency and was not specific to Co 5. Although this company offers English conversation and a correspondence course, she does not take part.

In her present position, Ms M uses English at her division's

meetings about three times a month. There are six people in her division: five are Japanese, and one is a Japanese-American who speaks fluent Japanese. However, meetings are conducted in English for practice. The employee takes minutes in Japanese at these meetings and later translates them into English. She finds the latter particularly difficult, especially translating business terms. On the other hand, having to writing short memos such as phone messages was considered to be a very easy task. The company does have foreign clients, but the employee's division has no direct communication with them.

The employee's idea of ideal preparation for her current position would be to study business English. She concluded that students need to study independently as the lessons at university are not practical enough. She also recommended speaking English with friends as much as possible for practice.

Employee: Ms O

This employee of the product management group was exposed to English from an early age as her mother is an English teacher. As an elementary and junior high school pupil, she attended English conversation school once a week for 5 years, learning mainly everyday conversation. She also spoke English with her mother's British and American friends and with their children. She later studied at Keisen Jo Gakuen College, graduating from a similar course to the American, British and Canadian Studies course at Hokkai Gakuen University, consisting of two years of general education courses, and two years concentrating on cultural studies centering around the USA and the UK. There was a TOEIC test on entering the company, and another consisting of grammar, vocabulary, conversation, reading, and writing. She was also required to write a business letter in English.

Although the interviewee's superior has a great deal of telephone contact with staff in the head office in Switzerland, the interviewee herself is in contact with them by fax. In addition, her superior occasionally has visitors from Switzerland, and it is her responsibility to welcome them and make polite conversation with them when they arrive. Although she is otherwise not required to speak or write much English, 50% of all documents circulated within the company are in English, so she has to be able to read. She also corrects and types her supervisor's English correspondence. Around 50% of all the typing done within the company is also in English.

Other tasks include sending faxes and internal memos, and taking minutes of meetings in English. She also has to translate into Japanese, which she finds particularly difficult because of the pharmaceutical terms involved.

Her advice to undergraduate students preparing for her job would be to attend a business English course, and to study independently for the TOEIC exam. She regretted not having studied more at university, especially more about business English.

Company 6: Computer, communications, and office equipment

Personnel representative: Ms T

When a Japanese became company president in 1986, the use of English in memos decreased dramatically in Co 6. However, Ms T says that knowledge of English is still necessary for advancement. First-line managers, some of whom are Italians, use English in all memos. Most mid-level managers speak English, and two-thirds of them write drafts of letters in English. In addition, most communication with the head office is through English faxes. Co 6 does not have a set format for its business communications in English, so employees

use old letters and business English textbooks as models. Co 6 plans to implement e-mail in the near future, which calls for an even higher level of written English.

The most important use of spoken English occurs in the personnel department, especially when hiring English-speaking Italian managers. Calls that are not related to personnel serve mostly to confirm faxes or letters. English is also used in the area of computer programming: employees must be able to read the manuals which are all in English.

Although Co 6 no longer tests prospective employees in English, employees hoping to be placed in positions requiring English take the TOEIC test, which is also used for placement in English classes. Employees need a letter of recommendation from their supervisor and over 400 on the TOEIC in order to join English courses. With four levels of six students each, courses meet weekly for 90 minutes, using custom-written textbooks. Supervisors and fellow employees acknowledge that attending classes is actually part of the employee's job.

Each year, two employees from Japan participate in a nine-month work-study trip to Italy and England. Beforehand, there is an intensive training program of daily English lessons at a private school for one month. There is also special language and culture training for employees sent to the Japan Desk in Italy. When they get back from the Japan Desk, employees are also asked to join the English courses for language maintenance.

Employee: Mr E

Each day, about 30% of Mr E's job involves reading or writing in English. As a consultant on the computer hotline, Mr E needs to be able to read faxes and letters from abroad quickly. He notes that

because these communications are not written by NSs, they are sometimes confusing. On the other hand, although writing letters is difficult for Mr E, he feels relieved of the pressure of writing perfectly himself.

Part of Mr E's job involves his most difficult task, the translation of manuals from English into Japanese, which demands a solid understanding of the meaning and good control of the Japanese language as well. He also does simple translations of fellow employee's letters, which he considers easy.

Mr E took company English classes for two to three years and studied on his own for one year. Since there is no pressure to get a high score, he continues to take the company-sponsored TOEIC test twice a year.

Employee: Ms U

Ms U has been working for this company since she graduated from university five years ago. Ms U majored in English literature at Niigata University and went on a homestay program in the USA. She maintains her English skills by reading *Esquire* magazine.

Ms U's job, involving a joint project with Hong Kong and American affiliates, requires more spoken English than the average employee. About one-third of her work is done in English and when her Hong Kongese co-workers are visiting, she speaks only in English all day. Speaking in English at meetings is easier for her now that she knows her colleagues. However, speaking on the telephone remains a difficult task which she dreads.

Ms U writes letters, which require first drafts, and faxes, which do not, on the PC all the time. She refers to English software manuals daily, sometimes using a dictionary to understand them completely.

Employee: Mr H

When Mr H, a slightly older computer engineer, left an affiliate company to join the parent company, he trained his replacement who was from India. That was the first time Mr H had to use English on the job, but because of that experience, he is now confident of his English ability. He has made such rapid progress in two years of taking in-house English courses that he is not undergoing any special preparation for his impending departure to Italy for the second time this year.

Mr H writes English manuals for computer software he develops. His easiest task is writing technical or application specifications because he created the software and is not under a deadline, and because the technical terms are similar in both languages.

Mr H also writes many reports and faxes in English, rarely writing first drafts in Japanese. He occasionally translates Japanese reports into English to send to Italy, but more commonly translates computer-related materials from Japanese into English.

Mr H went to Italy twice this year, for a month each time, gaining a lot of confidence in his English speaking ability. He has a wide knowledge of both specialized and everyday vocabulary, and can paraphrase well. However, interpersonal aspects of communication such as making requests, expressing nuances of feelings and participating in discussions remain difficult for him. Mr H has given this much thought, attributing his difficulty to the task happening in 'real time' and to the fact that when he voices his own opinion, he must also consider the official standpoint of Co 6 as well as the feelings of the listeners. In addition, he is aware of differences in rhetorical patterns, stating that Italian managers tend to be extremely logical.

Company 7: Electronics and medical equipment

Personnel manager: Mr S

As a large enterprise with almost all Japanese employees, Co 7 has a strong Japanese, rather than international, company culture. English is not used on a general level, except by top managers who work abroad or conduct business meetings in English, or in the annual “opening ceremony” speech.

Official announcements are written in both English and Japanese; however, memos from Japanese employees to other Japanese employees are written only in Japanese. Reading English faxes is the most common use of English and is performed by everyone.

The most difficult task for most employees is speaking in English in any situation. English is the language of communication at the main office in the Netherlands; however, in the Japanese office, spoken English is rarely used except in the exports division. For example, communication was difficult with employees from the Netherlands who came for one week the summer prior to the interviews.

Nevertheless, all employees take an in-house English proficiency exam when joining the company. English classes of various levels are held weekly for two hours. These classes are considered to benefit the entire company, but are separate from work, on private time. In fact, once in a while none of the employees show up for class because work takes priority. When Japanese employees are stationed abroad for one or two weeks, they are given on-site language training.

Employee: Ms T

A graduate of the English Literature Department at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Ms T has worked at Co 7 for less than one year. While a student, she also took conversation classes at night and went

on a study-tour to the United States. However, on entering Co 7, she did not request a job in the imports section, which uses English, as she felt it more important to first gain an understanding of all aspects of the company.

When beginning her job at Co 7, she took the in-house multiple-choice sentence-level grammar test. Although upon entering the company she joined the English class, she dropped out after three months. The class was strongly business-centered, involving negotiation role-plays and listening to CNN business news. Ms T prefers to study more general English, especially reading and writing, which she strongly feels will be necessary for her work.

Ms T is in charge of ordering service manuals for medical equipment from the main office in the Netherlands. Her main use of English at work is for typing. Her job consists mostly of writing very short orders for service manuals, modeled on the orders left by the previous employee. If there is a problem, she writes a short inquiry. In addition, Ms T occasionally functions as a typist for longer letters written by other employees.

Ms T does use English on the telephone when there are problems with a service manual order, about once a month. She needs to be able to explain clearly and succinctly what the trouble is. The callers are often European speakers of English, whose accents she finds more difficult to understand than those of the occasional American caller.

Still, for Ms T, the most crucial aspect of her job is a good understanding of the equipment and of the terminology, and knowing which employees deal with which equipment. She notes that if customers are familiar with the equipment, then communication does not depend on whether they are NSs or non-native speakers (NNSs).

Company 8: Educational distributor and publishing

Personnel representative: Mr J

In this office, only the two part-timers of the 16 employees do not use English on a regular basis. In one of four divisions, foreign teachers make up 70% or more of their clientele. All intra-company business is conducted in English, especially correspondence with other branches in the USA, the UK and Singapore.

Mr J, the director, indicated all tasks given on the questionnaire as ones performed in English in his company. He also added "reading books to prepare presentations on them" and "giving presentations on the product." He judged the most important tasks to be reading correspondence, and listening and speaking on the telephone, and specified that "speaking face-to-face" would be as important as the latter. Not only are these tasks important, but employees must perform them very well. For the range of tasks, the simplest was judged to be answering and transferring telephone calls; the most difficult, giving a product presentation. Mr J observed that for new employees, participating in meetings in English may rank among the most difficult.

As an assessment prior to employment, an English application letter with C. V. is expected. Candidates selected for the next stage then participate in a panel interview by staff members, partly consisting of a role-play. The candidate is also expected to present a company product with only limited preparation. Tests are not given after hiring, but performance is monitored by Mr J, a NS, who rewards improvement. Problems may be addressed in meetings and memos. Furthermore, training for sales and marketing presentations is intended to improve language as well.

Future English needs will increase as Co 8 will become directly involved in publishing EFL textbooks specifically for Japan. Demands

on the employees' English will dramatically increase.

Employee: Mr T

Inside the company, Mr T, a marketing executive, works with foreign staff. Within the multinational, the same division employs nationals from the USA, Canada, England, and Singapore. Externally, he serves a clientele of foreign teachers from the USA and other English-speaking countries. Exchanges of information with foreign employees in other publishing houses are also conducted in English.

Although Mr T did not major in English, he studied it until the end of college at Rikkyo University (Saint Paul's), Tokyo. Applying for the job, he submitted a résumé in English. His writing was further assessed through a letter which he was asked to write to a customer. As for learning English informally, this occurred after beginning his current job, where the language is used on a daily basis.

Mr T provided three examples of tasks performed in English. First, he presented a sample of school visit reports. Returning from business trips, he writes these internal reports. Regarding the difficulty of this task, he commented that communicating with fellow employees was its function, and since the reports are internal to the Tokyo office, it is acceptable to make an occasional grammar mistake. He compared the difficulty of this task to that of writing letters externally. A higher standard applies to such correspondence since clients, for example, will be quick to identify mistakes. Letters therefore require greater attention than do school visit reports, and even occasional collaboration with a NS.

The second task was a Japanese version of the company's ELT catalogue. Information from the original English version is adapted. The third was the handout for a presentation he had given in Japanese

at a recent convention of EFL teachers. It consists of a list of references, mostly English-language EFL textbooks, as well as a collection of extracts, which served as material.

As for preparation for his job, Mr T would recommend getting accustomed to listening to English as it is spoken for daily conversation and business. In addition, he emphasized learning about cross-cultural communication.

Company 9: Beverage producer Personnel Manager: Mr I

Mr I explains that company policy requires that all employees be able to read and write all intra-office communications and official memos which are in English. However, a translation is added to personnel-related memos to avoid possible misunderstandings. Although the gap between the English needed at the managerial level and at the staff-level is wide, Mr I feels the level of English needed at Co 9 is high.

The most important task done by employees in English is reading memos. An important managerial-level task is writing memos, letters, and reports in English, which may be very time-consuming, so that some mid-level managers pass the job on to employees who are more proficient in English. Management-level meetings are conducted in English.

Job applicants take a two-hour written exam focusing on translation. In addition, newly-hired recruits take the TOEIC test unless they have studied abroad (about one-third of the job applicants) or have already gotten over a score of about 600 on TOEFL or TOEIC.

Most employees take conversational English at a contracted school, with 80% of the tuition subsidized by Co 9. If employees have been directed to learn English by their supervisors, Co 9 covers all costs.

There is no special language or cultural training for employees going abroad.

Employee: Mr S

Mr S came to Co 9 from Hokkaido about one year ago. He spent one year of his college career at California State University in Los Angeles, nine months of which were ESL classes and three months, undergraduate accounting courses.

Mr S's work, reorganizing the seventeen franchised packagers of Co 9's product, does not require him to use English externally. However, about 10% of his total workload involves English: translating internal Japanese documents into English for the management.

Mr S's easiest and most commonly performed task is reading in-house memos, which also serve as models for the memos he himself must write. Mr S reads articles in a glossy in-house magazine published only in English if they are about someone he knows. When an article concerning Co 9 appears in an English newspaper, copies of the article are circulated around the office; however, he does not read these, as the information usually appears in Japanese newspapers anyway.

Mr S's most difficult and time-consuming task is writing reports to the section manager about the results of meetings. He writes his first drafts in Japanese because the reports must be correctly done. Another extremely difficult task for him is translation of Japanese presentation documents. However, with the aid of three dictionaries, he makes great efforts to write logically and precisely.

Mr S occasionally attends business meetings in English. At a professional seminar in Hong Kong for employees of Co 9 this year, he understood more than half of what was said.

Since entering Co 9, Mr S has realized he never mastered business

reading and writing skills, and he advises incoming employees to study written business English: "Speaking is important, of course, but it's writing that's the most important. Don't colleges teach business English? [In university] we read a lot of novels, but we never did any Business English. Maybe people assume that in international companies, you speak to a lot of foreigners, but it's really the writing that's important."

Discussion

In this paper, our analysis will concentrate on five areas that are directly applicable to EFL university curriculums in Japan:

- (1) the four language skills;
- (2) specialized job-related knowledge;
- (3) the role of technology;
- (4) English as an international language;
- (5) testing and career development

(1) Language skills

a. Listening and Speaking

Since listening is rarely done in isolation in the workplace, we will consider listening and speaking together. The simplest typical task in this area is answering and transferring telephone calls, a predictable task that involves a large number of formulaic expressions.

The extent of the complexity of listening and speaking could be represented by two tasks: participating in meetings and discussions and giving presentations.

Mr J, personnel representative of Co 8, ranks participating in meetings as one of the most difficult tasks in any skill area for new

employees. One reason for this is that new employees must recognize and penetrate the social hierarchy in addition to manipulating language. Ms U, an employee of five years at Co 6, initially found meetings in English to be extremely difficult, less because of the language than because of not knowing the people she was working with.

The second representative task is giving presentations, which was mentioned by three of the personnel representatives as the most difficult task performed in English overall. According to Mr K, personnel representative of Co 1, this is because of employees' lack of experience and because of cultural differences, in particular, unfamiliarity with "western ways of thinking." Mr O, an employee of the same company, also stressed the importance of awareness of the culture of the audience when giving presentations, and described Western presentation style as "dynamic" and "responsive."

The complexity of the skills required for participating in meetings and giving presentations holds implications for the curriculum. Every task contains subskills of varying linguistic and cognitive complexity. By analyzing these, we can get a picture of the associated language skills, both linguistic and cognitive, which students must begin to develop.

Participating in meetings and discussions includes — minimally — listening for gist, listening for details, making inferences, asking for clarification, and responding to the speaker. Given that students may eventually need to make active contributions while attending meetings whether they are held in English or Japanese, curriculums should provide opportunity for this type of interaction, perhaps through tasks requiring problem-solving in group discussion or pair work.

Giving presentations is an extremely complex task involving reading and writing as well as oral skills. Japanese English classes tradi-

tionally make the task feasible by giving great attention to the delivery of a memorized recitation but little to the process of developing ideas or writing the text. It is important to consider both facets: the preparation and the actual presentation. Preparation skills involve research, outlining, developing and synthesizing relevant points, and all the subsequent necessary writing skills. Presentation skills include the ability to use note cards or outlines; pronunciation and intonation skills; monitoring for and responding appropriately to audience feedback.

A presentation skills course should synthesize previously-taught research, composition, and spoken skills. In order to prepare students for the demands of the business world, a strong emphasis on the process itself would allow a more comprehensive understanding of what is involved at all steps of the process: brainstorming, researching, organizing, composing, getting feedback, revising, and editing, and all this before the delivery of the speech. Oral presentation skills could be efficiently taught in conjunction with seminars, where students could develop ideas through brain-storming, peer tutoring, and conferencing.

b. Reading

The next range of tasks are those for reading. In general, reading occupies a high rank, with three personnel representatives specifying one of these tasks as the most important task performed by the employees. The simplest (as reported in interviews) and most common (as reported through questionnaire item #1.3) are reading faxes and memos. In fact, reading faxes and memos are the most commonly performed tasks, except for typing, overall. Reading faxes and memos represents the type of foreign language task that is most rewarding: short and simple, performed often, and yet important.

Employees did not specifically name any reading tasks as most

difficult. There is a general perception among the employees that reading is a common and therefore comfortable task. Because of the English education they have received, they are adept at the process of using dictionaries to look up technical vocabulary. However, when reading is the basis of another task — such as translation into Japanese, which we shall examine as a reading skill — the perception changes.

Many interviewees named translation into Japanese as a very difficult task. Translation into Japanese requires a complex set of skills with potential problems at several levels: comprehension of the English text; understanding specialized vocabulary; finding the most appropriate Japanese equivalents or renderings. The interviewees tended not to see their problems as stemming from the complexity of the associated reading skills, but from the specialized nature of the content. Mr E at Co 6 noted that translation demands clear understanding of the meaning. Other subjects also referred to the specialized nature of the information. For example, Ms O's job at Co 5 involves translating terms from oncology (the study of tumors) into Japanese, which she claims is very difficult. This work is usually done by a professional translator when detail is required, but if a general translation is sufficient, she does the work.

Another explanation given for difficulty in translation into Japanese is the Japanese language itself. One example is Mr E at Co 6, who translates computer manuals from English. His initial reading comprehension poses no problem because he is intimate with the material. However, he says that smooth translation requires good control of the Japanese language — deciding when to use katakana and when to use the proper Japanese word, and translating the same word consistently.

Our interpretation of the interviews regarding the difficulty associated with reading skills may hold implications for university EFL curriculums. Given the importance and frequency of reading, we should not be complacent about the employees' perception that it is straightforward to master. Whilst there seems a general perception among them that reading is a common and therefore comfortable task, the difficulties they have expressed regarding translation may reflect, to some extent, the complexity of the associated reading skills in addition to specialized knowledge and vocabulary. Perhaps if there is an underlying difficulty in reading skills for certain employees, it may be attributable to a common reading style in English observed among our EFL students, who prefer to "read" by looking up Japanese equivalents for most words in the text. The focus of their attention then becomes the equivalent words and expressions rather than the text itself. Since reading is often the basis for subsequent tasks, greater development of reading skills at the university may enable future employees to work more efficiently and with a greater sense of confidence.

c. Writing

The last range of skills are those for writing. The simplest writing tasks were routine communications by fax, e-mail or in-house memos. What we intend by "routine" is shared information, set format, and frequent occurrence. It is important to note that these routine communications are based on a large body of shared information so that little explanation is needed. In addition, they are almost telegraphic, thereby eliminating business formats and sensitive interpersonal protocol. Since universities generally offer little business writing practice, interviewees write their routine communications using

previous correspondence or business English textbooks as models. Most employees base their routine communication, whether faxes, orders, or e-mail, on previous correspondence or business textbooks. For example, Ms T's job in Co 7 consists mostly of writing very short orders for service manuals modeled on the orders left by the previous employee. The last characteristic of such writing is that it is often performed and therefore practiced. For example, in Co 2, employee Mr S claims one of the easiest tasks is writing e-mail messages because he does it all the time, sending about 20 a day.

The most difficult writing tasks are translation into English and writing reports. Both tasks involve the cognitive skills of organizing or reorganizing information. Furthermore, some interviewees tend to write the first draft of their reports in Japanese, so the writing task becomes essentially a translation task.

The areas of difficulty in writing reports and translating into English mentioned by our subjects tend to fall into three problematic areas: knowledge of content; the development of ideas into rhetorical patterns; and accountability anxiety. As for content, no dictionary can replace a missing schema. For this reason, Ms M of Co 5 finds translating business documents difficult. As for rhetorical patterns, the difficulty that Mr S of Co 9 expresses regarding presentation documents is evidence that translation is not merely an exercise in finding a series of exact terms. The premises of the discourse must be ordered according to the rhetorical conventions of English as well.

The third issue related to report-writing and translation into English that emerged reflects the psychological pressure involved in writing as an active skill, and a reluctance on the part of some to produce the work directly in English. Subjects feel pressure because of the sense of personal responsibility inherent in writing and because of

the enormous time needed to complete longer writing tasks. Mr J of Co 9, despite having studied in an American university for a year, drafts his reports to the section manager in Japanese, and then writes them in English. His rationale for this process is to ensure that the reports are correctly done. Yet given that he must first report in Japanese and then translate, the task is expanded when compared to writing directly in English. We learn from Mr I, personnel representative of the same company, that depending on the employee's proficiency, writing reports may be very time-consuming, so some mid-level managers pass the job on to other employees who are more proficient in English. Ms T, personnel representative of Co 3, notes that actively having to write in English is nerve-racking for employees because of the responsibility.

One of the most surprising results of this study is the prominence of English writing skills in the workplace, even at entry levels. Goodman and Oriyasa (1993) also found that the tasks of new employees required frequent use of writing skills in the handling of particular tasks such as preparing shipping documents or invoicing. The direct implication is that writing skills must occupy a central place in the EFL curriculum. How might curriculums address the three problem areas of content, rhetorical patterns, and accountability?

In light of the employees' on-the-job writing needs, greater integration of content may be desirable in the EFL courses. With the cooperation of content teachers, some institutions may be able to consider requiring assignments to be written in English for lecture courses normally given in Japanese. Such integration would serve to address more adequately the need for preparing future employees to write in specialized areas.

Most writing instructors already teach rhetorical patterns, along with other conventions of written English. The development of these

writing skills remain emergent in the workplace however. A reduced student-teacher ratio may therefore achieve a higher university standard. At the same time, it would allow more time for collaborating between content and EFL instructors in order to attain more substantive integration. Considering that we have found a certain level of anxiety reported with regard to report-writing, and even some evidence of avoidance, writing skills require greater attention as part of EFL instruction. For example, if any piece of writing can be responded to by someone other than the instructor, students will begin to realize its interpersonal nature. To help students learn to cope with the pressure of writing quickly, teachers could occasionally conduct in-class timed writing assignments, always with reference to a real-life working situation. Tasks and activities in an EFL curriculum which develop process-writing skills may be highly desirable preparation for the demands of the internationalizing workplace.

(2) The Role of Technology

One area closely related to writing which cannot be ignored is that of the influence of technology on the international workplace. Eleven of the thirteen employees answered that they constantly used a typewriter, a word processor, or a computer in their work, and this task was accordingly judged by the personnel representatives as one of the most important.

In particular, the use of e-mail was prevalent. Co 6, which had not yet installed an e-mail system, but was soon to do so, foresaw the need for a "higher level of English" as a result. According to their personnel representative, "When you write a fax, you have time to use a dictionary, but not with e-mail." Although this is a misconception, e-mail, unlike faxes which may be jotted off in Japanese or proofread

before sending, must be entered in English on a keyboard, and is generally sent immediately. E-mail therefore requires a greater level of confidence, if not proficiency.

While this frequent use of technology is not surprising, and few respondents considered it a particularly difficult task in itself, new employees do need to be prepared for an English keyboard environment. English and technology can no longer be separated.

In light of these findings, it would not be unreasonable for English instructors to expect their students to type their assignments. Writing classes should incorporate this word-processing technology as far as possible in order to familiarize the students before they enter the working world. Ideally, this would also encourage rewriting on the part of the students.

(3) Specialized Job-Related Knowledge

The next area that deserves special mention is specialized job-related knowledge. A number of tasks which employees found difficult in English would also be difficult in Japanese due to a lack of job-related knowledge. Dealing with tax problems was mentioned by two of the interviewees: Ms M from Co 4 complained about "having to deal with foreign employees' tax and having to explain the procedure to them in English," as an example. Similarly, Mr K from Co 1 had been given the task of taking care of salaries, including the final tax return, for the directors, both Japanese and foreigners. As a result, he had to be able to communicate with them in English about such matters as income tax. This employee was subsequently given special in-house training to help him.

A good understanding of the company's product or service was also a crucial aspect for some of the interviewees. In the words of Ms T

from Co 7, “Without a good knowledge of your job, you can’t communicate, no matter how good your language skills are.”

In terms of classroom application, it may be impossible for EFL instructors to prepare their students for every situation in the working world. However, instructors could certainly go some of the way towards exposing students to a variety of situations using English as the medium. For example, involving students in role-plays and simulations similar to real-life work situations may not only improve communicative interaction but also serve as workplace preparation.

(4) English as an International Language (EIL)

In the multinational companies that we interviewed, English is often used for communication with NNSs from all over the world. Two aspects of English as an International Language need special mention: linguistic and cross-cultural. The former involves differences between English as it is typically used by Japanese on the one hand and as it is typically used by Italians, Germans, and native speakers of other languages on the other. It would seem that, in the workplace, the impact of these differences depends on whether the language is written or spoken.

Several interviewees mentioned that when writing short letters to other NSs, they feel that the grammar does not have to be perfect because the recipient is not a NS. In an e-mail exchange we observed between a Japanese and an Italian employee, grammatical errors are apparent on both sides, yet communication was not impaired. In fact, in terms of vocabulary and grammar, reading EIL may in fact be an advantage, as the other NNS would also tend to use simple vocabulary and sentence structures.

However, in an oral mode, communication between various NNS

speakers may be a problem. Goodman and Orikasa (1993) note that "...because many of the international calls are from countries where English is not the mother tongue, the communication problem is compounded by questions of accents and ungrammatical English usage" (p.7). Ms T at Co 7, who receives telephone calls mostly from European speakers of English, still finds their accents more difficult to understand than the accents of American clients who call only occasionally. She said that this is because she is used to the English spoken by her American university teachers. On the other hand, employees at Co 6, which is based in Italy, find that Italian-English is easy to understand as the Italian employees speak very slowly and their vowels are very clear.

These situations suggest that students should be exposed to a variety of slight NNS accents in listening comprehension classes. Many instructors may find it difficult to justify exposing students to English that is less than "perfect", but the situation of employees at multinationals suggests that this is exactly what is required. One source of fluent English in NNS accents is CNN's "World Report," featuring human interest stories from around the world. Another source, especially in Tokyo, would be the foreign community.

Another aspect of EIL is culture. Three of the nine companies train their employees in cross-cultural skills; in fact, the personnel manager at Co 5 judges cross-cultural skills to be more important than language skills. Imai (1993) finds that even among Japanese companies, 19% conduct cross-cultural training.

(5) Testing and career development

The next area which warrants discussion is that of testing and promotion. The extent to which the companies use commercially-

produced tests to assess their employees' English proficiency was surprising. Specifically, seven of the nine companies use TOEIC, which is sometimes combined with another in-house test or commercial test such as the Foreign Service Exam.

The way in which TOEIC results are taken into account varies greatly from company to company. At some, the results are used for placement or for keeping track of progress in company English classes. At a few others, employees need to get a certain score in order to be placed in a position that uses English. At Co 5, "the better employees do in the TOEIC, the more chance they have in being transferred abroad." At Co 1, Mr K reports that although consideration for transfers abroad formally depends on an employee's knowledge of the job and no criteria with regard to English are specified, a TOEIC result could be important, depending on the manager. Mr Y at Co 4 notes that, "You must have [a TOEIC score] in order to be promoted. At salesperson level, employees don't need it, but at managerial level, it's imperative. It's also used as part of the general assessment criteria."

There is also variation in where the impetus to take the TOEIC exam originates. At one extreme is the top-down directive: At Co 1, the new president has become involved in improving the standard of English and requests that employees obtain a score greater than 500 on the TOEIC within this next year. At the other extreme, several companies sponsor the TOEIC twice a year with no pressure on employees to take it or to achieve a certain score. For them, the impetus for taking any English proficiency exam is simply self-development.

The link between English-language competence and promotion is clearly recognized by the personnel representatives although English-language proficiency is obviously not the sole criterion when consider-

ing promotions. However, as Mr I in Co 9 informed us, English is “used as one part of the general assessment criteria.” He added that English was no longer a “special talent”, but that “an employee who wasn’t competent in English wouldn’t get on in his or her career.”

Ms T of Co 3 echoed this sentiment when she stated that English was important in order to be promoted, but added that lack of English competence did not necessarily mean an inability to do one’s job. Presumably, this would apply more to those employees whose jobs do not require a particularly high level of English competency.

Employees themselves recognize the importance of English in advancing their careers. In Co 6, the first-line managers are now proficient in English. On entering the company, however, this was not the case. They had recognized that English was a deciding factor in their futures and had studied “little by little until they became fluent.” Mr S from Co 9 also acknowledged that he would need to improve on his English speaking skills in preparation for his future career.

In the case of Co 8, English performance is constantly monitored by the director, a NS. Improvement is valued and rewarded. Conversely, in one instance, a demotion resulting in less responsibility was sanctioned against an employee who had not progressed.

The personnel representative at Co 9, Mr I, saw a large gap between the English needed at the managerial level and the English needed at the staff level. For him, English proficiency was the deciding factor when considering candidates for promotion: “If two employees who were otherwise similar were both being considered for the same position, the one who was better at English would get the promotion.”

The lower-level employees using English perform specific tasks which require specific English-language knowledge. The further one

climbs up the corporate ladder, however, the more an all-round competency in English seems to be required.

One commonly-cited problem with EFL in Japan is that English is often taught for testing purposes — for high school and university entrance exams. At the university level, we feel free of that pressure, but the reality is that English qualifications and certificates play a very strong role in the working world. The question for universities is how to acknowledge the demand for test preparation.

As for university EFL curriculums, the best test preparation is teaching the skills themselves. Test preparation in the absence of such skills will fail to have its intended effect. Some institutions may well provide test preparation as part of their EFL program, but should understand that familiarity with the test format is a tactic strategy, which, by itself, cannot replace the skills assessed by standardized testing instruments such as TOEIC.

Advice for companies would be to reflect upon their needs in terms of the actual tasks performed by employees. Innovations such as the assessment of candidates performed by Co 8 (see case study) should serve as models for other companies in search of clearly defined measures of the kind of proficiency actually required of their employees.

Conclusion

This pilot study of the EFL needs of foreign-based multi-national companies indicates the increasing importance of English in the workplace. Strong reading and translation skills remain absolutely vital, partly because English is the vehicle of information, especially technical knowledge, from other countries. Additionally, due to the computeri-

zation of the workplace, English writing skills are strongly emphasized. Finally, the role of listening in the workplace is influenced by the use of English by other NNSs. In order to stay abreast of these and other developments, stronger lines of communication, and not simply “connections,” between business and higher education must be developed.

Our analysis suggests a number of directions for further research. Confirmation of our analysis would be highly desirable on a greater scale. Our case study approach can provide insight at some depth for individual interviewees, but for national trends, our collection will have limited generalizability. Other institutions are therefore encouraged to collaborate with local companies on some of the issues in this paper. In this way, institutions may address the needs of their community on a local basis.

We would like to express our thanks to the companies who so graciously participated in the interviews, and to Profs. Nakagawa and Kobayashi of Hokkai Gakuen University for translating the instruments.

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APPENDIX 1

EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate how often you do the following tasks by circling the corresponding number: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all the time

	<i>never</i>	<i>rarely</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>all the time</i>
READING TASKS:					
1.1 extracting information from an English newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
1.2 proofreading a piece of writing in English	1	2	3	4	5
1.3 reading a letter/fax/any piece of correspondence in English	1	2	3	4	5
1.4 reading training/instruction manuals	1	2	3	4	5
1.5 reading orders from clients	1	2	3	4	5

other: _____

WRITING TASKS:					
2.1 writing to clients in English	1	2	3	4	5
2.2 writing internal memos in English	1	2	3	4	5
2.3 making orders in English	1	2	3	4	5
2.4 billing clients in English	1	2	3	4	5
2.5 writing reports in English	1	2	3	4	5
2.6 translating something into English	1	2	3	4	5
2.7 writing for advertising in English	1	2	3	4	5
2.8 using a typewriter/word processor/computer	1	2	3	4	5

other: _____

LISTENING TASKS:					
3.1 attending business meetings in English	1	2	3	4	5
3.2 listening for travel announcements in English	1	2	3	4	5
3.3 listening for instructions given in English	1	2	3	4	5
3.4 listening to English on the telephone	1	2	3	4	5

other: _____

SPEAKING TASKS:					
4.1 speaking at business meetings in English	1	2	3	4	5
4.2 entertaining English-speaking clients	1	2	3	4	5
4.3 speaking in English on the telephone	1	2	3	4	5
4.4 interpreting into English	1	2	3	4	5
4.5 social chit-chat	1	2	3	4	5

other: _____

貴社社員に対する質問

(Employee Questionnaire)

以下に挙げる業務をどのくらい頻繁に行っているか、1から5の中からそれぞれ選んで下さい。1：全くない、2：まれに、3：ときどき、4：頻繁に、5：常に

1：英文書を読む業務：

1-1	英字新聞から情報収集することがある	1	2	3	4	5
1-2	英文の校正作業をすることがある	1	2	3	4	5
1-3	英文の手紙、FAX、その他の通信文を読むことがある	1	2	3	4	5
1-4	英文の手引書やその他のマニュアルを読むことがある	1	2	3	4	5
1-5	顧客からの注文書を読むことがある	1	2	3	4	5

その他: _____

2：英文を作成する業務：

2-1	顧客に英文で通信することがある	1	2	3	4	5
2-2	社内メモを英文で書くことがある	1	2	3	4	5
2-3	英文で注文書を書くことがある	1	2	3	4	5
2-4	顧客に英文の請求書を送付することがある	1	2	3	4	5
2-5	英文で報告書を書くことがある	1	2	3	4	5
2-6	何か文書を英文に翻訳することがある	1	2	3	4	5
2-7	英文の広告を作ることがある	1	2	3	4	5
2-8	タイプ、ワープロ、パソコンを使用することがある	1	2	3	4	5

その他: _____

3：英語を聞く業務：

3-1	英語使用の会合に出席することがある	1	2	3	4	5
3-2	英語による旅行案内を海外で聞くことがある	1	2	3	4	5
3-3	社内で英語による指示、命令を聞くことがある	1	2	3	4	5
3-4	電話で英語を聞くことがある。	1	2	3	4	5

その他: _____

4：英語を話す業務：

4-1	商談を英語で行うことがある	1	2	3	4	5
4-2	英語を使用する顧客を接待することがある	1	2	3	4	5
4-3	電話で英語を話すことがある	1	2	3	4	5
4-4	日英、英日の通訳をすることがある	1	2	3	4	5
4-5	社交辞令を英語で交わすことがある	1	2	3	4	5

その他: _____

PERSONNEL QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate by circling **yes** or **no** whether or not your employees do the following tasks.

READING TASKS:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1.1 extracting information from an English newspaper | yes | no |
| 1.2 proofreading a piece of writing in English | yes | no |
| 1.3 reading a letter/fax/any piece of correspondence in English | yes | no |
| 1.4 reading training/instruction manuals | yes | no |
| 1.5 reading orders from clients | yes | no |

other: _____

WRITING TASKS:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 2.1 writing to clients in English | yes | no |
| 2.2 writing internal memos in English | yes | no |
| 2.3 making orders in English | yes | no |
| 2.4 billing clients in English | yes | no |
| 2.5 writing reports in English | yes | no |
| 2.6 translating something into English | yes | no |
| 2.7 writing for advertising in English | yes | no |
| 2.8 using a typewriter/word processor/computer | yes | no |

other: _____

LISTENING TASKS:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 3.1 attending business meetings in English | yes | no |
| 3.2 listening for travel announcements in English | yes | no |
| 3.3 listening for instructions given in English | yes | no |
| 3.4 listening to English on the telephone | yes | no |

other: _____

SPEAKING TASKS:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 4.1 speaking at business meetings in English | yes | no |
| 4.2 entertaining English-speaking clients | yes | no |
| 4.3 speaking in English on the telephone | yes | no |
| 4.4 interpreting into English | yes | no |
| 4.5 social chit-chat | yes | no |

other: _____

人事部の方に対する質問

(Personnel Questionnaire)

手順：貴社の社員が以下に挙げる行為を業務上行っているかどうかについて、お答えください。
「はい」、「いいえ」のどちらかをまるで囲んで下さい。

1：英文書を読む業務：

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|----|-----|
| 1-1 | 英字新聞から情報収集することがある | はい | いいえ |
| 1-2 | 英文の校正作業をすることがある | はい | いいえ |
| 1-3 | 英文の手紙、FAX、その他の通信文を読むことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 1-4 | 英文の手引書やその他のマニュアルを読むことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 1-5 | 顧客からの注文書を読むことがある | はい | いいえ |
- その他: _____

2：英文を作成する業務：

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|----|-----|
| 2-1 | 顧客に英文で通信することがある | はい | いいえ |
| 2-2 | 社内メモを英文で書くことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 2-3 | 英文で注文書を書くことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 2-4 | 顧客に英文の請求書を送付することがある | はい | いいえ |
| 2-5 | 英文で報告書を書くことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 2-6 | 何か文書を英文に翻訳することがある | はい | いいえ |
| 2-7 | 英文の広告を作ることがある | はい | いいえ |
| 2-8 | タイプ、ワープロ、パソコンを使用することがある | はい | いいえ |
- その他: _____

3：英語を聞く業務：

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----|-----|
| 3-1 | 英語使用の会合に出席することがある | はい | いいえ |
| 3-2 | 英語による旅行案内を海外で聞くことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 3-3 | 社内で英語による指示、命令を聞くことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 3-4 | 電話で英語を聞くことができる | はい | いいえ |
- その他: _____

4：英語を話す業務：

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|----|-----|
| 4-1 | 商談を英語で行うことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 4-2 | 英語を使用する顧客を接待することがある | はい | いいえ |
| 4-3 | 電話で英語を話すことがある | はい | いいえ |
| 4-4 | 日英、英日の通訳をすることがある | はい | いいえ |
| 4-5 | 社交辞令を英語で交わすことがある | はい | いいえ |
- その他: _____

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE EMPLOYEE

1. Employee's purpose for using English

- a. With whom do you use English?
- b. Do you use English inside the company only? With whom?
- c. Do you serve foreign clients in Japan? Where from?
- d. Do you deal with international clients abroad? Who with? Where from?

2. Employee's preparation in English

- a. What was your formal English education before joining the company? At what institution did you study? Where is this institution located--in Japan or abroad? How many English courses did you take? What was the length of these courses? What did you study in these courses--grammar? vocabulary? conversation? reading? writing?
- b. Have you learned English informally? If yes, where? and what did you do to "pick it up?"

3. English-language testing

- a. Were you tested on your English ability when you applied? If so, how?
- b. Since joining your company, at any time have you been tested? If so, why were you tested? How were you tested?

4. In-house training in English

- a. Does your company provide English training?
- b. Is it specifically related to your job? If yes, explain how.
- c. If your company provides English training not specifically related to your job, please explain what is taught.

5. Tasks performed in English

- a. Please show me something (e. g. letter, promotional video, pamphlet, demonstration of a product, etc) that you do in English and explain how you do it. If you don't have something to show, please give me an example of something you do in English
- b. Is it difficult? If so, why?
- c. What (other) things do you find difficult in your job in terms of English language?
- d. Please talk about the range of tasks you must perform in English. What would be the simplest? the most difficult?

6. Ideal English-language training

- a. If a student wanted your job, what advice would you give him/her about learning English in preparation for the job?

7. Interviewee input

- a. Is there anything related to learning English or using English on the job that you would like to tell us about?

8. Future participation

- a. Would you be interested in participating in further research about using English on the job?

貴社社員に対するインタビュー

(Interview Questions for the Employee)

- 1 : 社員が英語を使用する目的について
 - a. 誰に対して英語を使用しますか。
 - b. 英語は社内でしか使用しませんか。また誰に対して使用しますか。
 - c. 国内で外国人の顧客を扱うことがありますか。どこの国の方々ですか。
 - d. 海外で外国人の顧客を扱うことがありますか。どこの国の方々ですか。
- 2 : 社員の英語の準備
 - a. 入社前の正式な英語教育はどのようなものでしたか。どこで勉強しましたか（学校など）。国内で勉強しましたか、海外でしましたか。英語の授業はいくつ取りましたか。それらの授業はどれぐらいの期間でしたか。またどのような内容のものを習いましたか。文法ですか、語彙ですか、会話ですか、読解ですか、英作文ですか。
 - b. 英語を非公式に習ったことがありますか。どこでどのように覚えましたか。
- 3 : 英語能力試験
 - a. 入社試験の際に英語テストがありましたか。それはどのようなものでしたか。
 - b. 入社後英語テストがありましたか。それはいつ、どのように、何の目的で行われましたか。
- 4 : 英語社内研修
 - a. 英語の社内研修がありますか。
 - b. それは仕事に直接関連した内容のものでしょうか。そうであれば、どのような関連があるか説明して下さい。
 - c. もし社内研修が仕事に直接関連したものでなければ、実際何が教えられているかを説明下さい。
- 5 : 英語による業務
 - a. 英語を媒体とした業務やアウトプット（手紙、プロモーションビデオ、パンフレット、商品の説明など）を見せて下さい。もし手元になければ、それについて話して下さい。
 - b. それは難しいですか。どうして難しいですか。
 - c. 英語に関して業務上何が最も難しいですか。
 - d. 英語を行わなければならない業務の範囲を教えてください。何が一番易しく、何が最も難しいですか。
- 6 : 理想的な英語研修について
 - a. 貴方の職種を目指している学生に対して、仕事のために必要な英語の学習についてどのようなアドバイスをしますか。
- 7 : その他の追加事項
 - a. 英語の学習や業務上の英語の使用に関して何か付け加えることはありませんか。
8. 今後の準備
 - a. 業務上の英語の使用に関する今後の研究に興味がありますか。

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL

1. Company background

- a. Please tell us a little bit about your company. Would you have a prospectus or any other general information available to the public about your company. What size is your company? Number of employees?
- b. What services or products are provided by your company?

2. Role of English in the company

- a. Is English used inside the company? If so, among which employees? How many employees would be required to know English in your company?
- b. Do you serve foreign clients in Japan? Where from?
- c. Do you deal with international clients abroad? Where from?
- d. Would your opinion be that your needs for English would be fairly typical of other international companies in Japan? If not, can you explain what makes your needs particular to your company.

3. Employee performance in English

- a. Of those tasks circled 'yes,' identify the three most important. Why are these tasks important? How well are your employees able to do them?
- b. Please talk about the range of skills in English that your company requires. What would be the simplest task. What would be one of the most difficult that your employees must perform?

4. English-language testing

- a. Do you test potential employees on their English ability? How?
- b. How do you make decisions about potential employees with regard to English-language proficiency? What kind of experience, background, or qualifications would you find most desirable?
- c. Do you test or assess employees for English during their employment? How? What is the purpose of this assessment? .promotions?...transfers abroad?

5. In-house language training

- a. Do you provide in-house training? Is it specifically related to the employees' jobs, or is it "conversation classes?" Please describe the content of what is taught.
- b. Tell us about your employees being sent to offices abroad--preparation, instruction while outside Japan for adjusting to life abroad, efforts to keep up the language on return

6. Future needs

- a. Are your demands for English in your company increasing? If so, in what way?

7. Interviewee input

- a. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your needs for English or language training in your company?

8. Future participation

- a. Would you be interested in participating in further research about needs for English and language training on the job?

人事部の方に対するインタビュー

(Interview Questions for Personnel)

- 1 : 会社の背景について
 - a : 貴社の会社概要または社内案内は一般に手に入れることができますか。会社の規模はどのくらいですか。社員数はどのくらいですか。
 - b : 貴社のサービスや製品にはどのようなものがありますか。
- 2 : 社内における英語の役割について
 - a : 社内で英語が使用されていますか。どのような社員の方々が使用しますか。貴社の中で何人の社員の方々が英語を理解しなければなりませんか。
 - b : 国内で外国人の顧客を扱うことがありますか。どこ国の方々ですか。
 - c : 国外で外国の顧客を扱うことがありますか。どこの国の方々ですか。
 - d : 貴社での英語のニーズは国内にある国際的な取引をしている会社の中でも典型的な例であると思いますか。もしそうでないとなれば、貴社での英語のニーズの特異性は何ですか。
- 3 : 貴社社員の英語技能について
 - a : 上で「はい」とお答えになった業務のなかで一番重要なものを3つあげて下さい。また、それらはなぜ大切ですか。また貴社社員はそれらの業務をどのくらいの程度までこなしていますか。
 - b : 貴社で求められる英語力の範囲について話して下さい。英語を使用した業務の中で一番容易なものは何ですか。また一番難しいものは何ですか。
- 4 : 英語テスト
 - a : 入社試験の中に英語テストが含まれますか。それはどんなものですか。
 - b : その人物を雇用するかしないかを判定する英語の能力の基準は何ですか。どのような経験、経歴、資格などをもとに行っていますか。
 - c : 入社後に英語テストをしますか。それは昇級のためですか海外派遣のためですか。
- 5 : 社内英語研修について
 - a : 社内英語研修を行っていますか。それは社員の職務に直接関わった内容のものですか、それとも英会話程度のものでしょうか。研修の内容を教えてください。
 - b : 海外に派遣される社員の方々についてお話し下さい。出国前の準備、着任後の新環境への適合を図るための現地での教育、更に日本への帰国後の英語力維持はどのようにしていますか。
- 6 : 将来のニーズについて
 - a : 英語のニーズは増加しつつありますか。そうであれば、どのようにですか。
- 7 : その他の追加事項
 - a : 貴社における英語に対するニーズまたは英語研修に対するニーズについて何かその他に付け加えられることはありませんか。
- 8 : 将来への準備について
 - a : 英語に対するニーズまたは英語研修に対するニーズに関する今後の研究について興味をお持ちですか。