[Keynote Paper presented to the 6th Tokyo Conference on Argumentation 2020]
（第 6 回議論学国際学術会議基調講演論文）

Crisis Management in Communication:
New Directions in English Language Teaching in Japan

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Abstract

As teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) has developed from the heyday of the grammar-translation method to the present time—when a heavy emphasis is placed on communication—the concept of the successful learner of English has changed over the years, and we teachers now face a new challenge: the responsibility for helping learners to avoid crises in communication. There are some inadequacies in TEFL in Japan that need to be addressed if we are to equip learners with an ability to handle those crises. One of the problems is that learners are being given virtually no explicit instruction in using English in argumentative discourse. I propose that TEFL should cover 'argumentation-and-language integrated learning,' which may be thought of as a subcategory of content-and-language integrated learning (CLIL).
Keywords: argumentation, CEFR, Course of Study, crises in communication, critical thinking, TEFL

Introduction

The purpose of this talk is to review the changes in priorities that have taken place in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Japan for the last several decades and share with the audience some of the proposals that I have made, as an English teacher and material writer, for a set of new ideas in TEFL which I think are better suited to the situation in which many of our learners in Japan find themselves at present.[1] Through this discussion I hope to argue that there is one area of TEFL that should receive more attention in this country than it has received so far: the teaching of argumentative skills. Training of learners in this area is urgently needed if they are to prepare themselves successfully for the communicative challenges that they are bound to face once they leave the classroom and plunge into the real world.

In this presentation I shall be using three sets of terms that need to be defined: (a) 'Critical thinking' shall mean analytically examining ideas and propositions.[2]   I shall also be using the term 'critical thinking skills.'   (b) 'Argumentation' shall mean interaction in which a difference of opinion needs to be settled between parties representing different positions.[3]   I shall also be using phrases such as 'argumentative skills' and 'argumentative discourse.'   (c) Finally, I shall be using the term 'logic,' which is often used by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (hereafter 'MEXT').   When used in connection with the secondary school subjects English and Japanese, its meaning usually covers both critical thinking and argumentation.

In the past, English was taught at schools in Japan primarily for the purpose of enhancing learners' general education rather than for practical purposes.   Only a small proportion of students finished formal education and went into professions that required a high proficiency in English or some other foreign language (only 7.9 percent of 18-year-olds entered university in 1954 according to a MEXT survey[4]).   Most young people who were learning English at schools were doing so in order to pass entrance examinations to be admitted to a secondary school or university and then to pass intramural examinations to graduate.

While this picture still applies to much of what is being done in the teaching of English in Japan, a new way of thinking is emerging among TEFL teachers, learners and education policy makers: As a result of the recent phenomenal increase in the volume of information exchanged internationally, proficiency in English is beginning to be regarded by TEFL stakeholders as a real communication tool.   What has enabled the robust traffic of information is of course the development of communication technology.   Ironically, however, the technological innovations that have been promoted to make communication easy have in fact brought home to us how communication can be difficult.   The problems that people encounter while being engaged in communication—I would like to call them 'crises in communication'—are of many different kinds, of which I shall cite some examples later.   Whatever sorts of problems are likely to arise in the process of communication, it is the responsibility of language teachers—I am one of them—to try to teach in the classroom in a way that would prevent learners from experiencing such crises when they use English for communication in the future.   In this talk I would like to propose that we language teachers need to shift the balance of our work to focus more on helping learners to acquire skills in coping with these crises.

What does it mean to know English?

Ideals of the grammar-translation method

The history of TEFL may be regarded as a history of changes in people's perception of what it means to know English.   Of the major language teaching methods, the earliest one will be the grammar-translation method.   It is the method that has been followed at virtually all schools in Japan ever since foreign language education was started in earnest in the 19th century.   This method typically uses a coursebook in which each chapter focuses on a particular grammatical rule, or a set of rules, with explicit mention of grammatical terminology.   Use of the grammar-translation method, or some variations thereof, is still prevent at schools in Japan.   A successful learner who has learned a language by this method may be defined as someone who knows many rules of the grammar of the target language and who is good at translating the target language into his or her mother tongue and vice versa.

The grammar-translation method helps learners to accurately grasp the grammatical structure—and often the semantic structure, too—of sentences in learners' target language.   Also, use of learners' native language as a reference system is helpful for comprehension.   On the other hand, it has some demerits: Because slow transmission of ideas is inherent in the translation process, learners do not develop proficiency in using the target language efficiently.   Another weakness of this method is that it tends to make learners focus on grammatical concepts and the terminology needed to discuss them rather than on learning the language itself.   Furthermore, because it does not emphasize oral communication, it is likely to produce learners who are not proficient at speaking.

Ideals of the direct method

There were some methods that emerged as an answer to the limitations of the grammar-translation method.   One of them was the direct method, which is often associated with Berlitz schools (Brown, 2007, p. 50) and goes back to language teaching reforms, particularly in Europe, towards the end of the 19th century (Howatt, 1984, pp. 169-189).   It is characterized by exclusive use of the target language as the medium of instruction and by avoidance of the use of learners' native language. Grammar is not explicitly taught but is supposed to be discovered by learners themselves through exposure to materials in the target language.   '[A] first attempt to make the language *learning* situation one of language *use*,' the method views language learning 'as analogous to first language acquisition' (Stern, 1983, p. 459).   Thus, a successful student learning a language by the direct method is someone who can

perform well in an environment where the target language is the only means of communication.   Two major problems have been pointed out with the method: Use of the target language as a means of instruction may make it difficult for the teacher to convey meaning to learners; application of the method to the training of learners beyond elementary levels could be challenging (Stern, 1983, p. 460).

Ideals of the audiolingual method

Sharing some major features with the direct method but originating later, chiefly in the United States, was another antithesis of the grammar-translation method: the audiolingual method, exemplified by the 'Army Method,' which was used in the American language programmes during World War II for the training of military personnel in foreign languages (Stern, 1983, p. 102 and p. 463; Brown, 2007, p. 111). The theoretical underpinnings of this method were behavioural psychology and structural linguistics: Its basic idea was that language use should be interpreted in the framework of the relation between stimulus and response; learners learning by this method were able to practice language items 'without having to think hard' (Stern, 1993, p. 341).   A successful student who has learned a language by the audiolingual method is thus someone who would respond quickly to a situation using the target language, namely someone who has accumulated a large number of sentence patterns and who has achieved enough automaticity in the use of those patterns.   This idea led to methods of practice such as pattern practice, which aimed at enabling learners to produce speech instantly, without having to go to the trouble of translating sentences in their mother tongue into the target language.   Work in the language laboratory was considered an effective way of learning a language by the audiolingual method.   In Japan, in fact, there was a time when almost all public junior and senior high schools devoted one class period per week to training in the language laboratory; the Ministry of Education[5] stipulated the Audio-visual Educational Media Teacher Training Curriculum Standard in 1973, and the Ministry's programme for training English teachers in leadership roles covered training in the use of the language laboratory (Ochiai, 1980).

Focus on communication

It turned out that the audiolingual method had its own weaknesses.   Criticisms were levelled against it by those who thought that this method viewed learners merely as stimulus-response mechanisms (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 28).   Indeed, when learners were engaged in mechanical drills such as pattern practice, they were not communicating: They were either memorizing or rehearsing sentences, and it was even possible that they were saying sentences without paying much attention to what

they meant. These criticisms gave rise to new thinking in language teaching, in the 1970s, which was called communicative language teaching (CLT) or the communicative approach. CLT centred around the idea that the purpose of language use is communication and that a successful language student is someone who is able to convey meaning. As Widdowson (1978, p. 1) put it, 'Someone knowing a language knows more than how to understand, speak, read and write sentences. He (*sic*) also knows how sentences are used to communicative effect.' CLT is not a specific language teaching method. Rather, it is a general philosophy in language teaching that recognizes the importance of communication. In CLT, communicative competence in a language is regarded as embracing not only its grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary but other factors[6] including sociolinguistic competence, namely an ability to use language appropriately to suit the situation where one finds oneself, e.g. an ability to judge whether one should use one's interlocutor's first name or not.

TEFL today places an increasingly heavy emphasis on communication. Learners' language proficiency is often measured against a set of criteria formulated by the Council of Europe, called the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), whose updated version has just been made public (Council of Europe, 2018). This framework is meant to assess language users' communicative ability, namely what they can actually do using language. For example, according to this framework, someone at level C2—the highest level—in the area of interaction in formal discussion can do the following:

> Can hold his/her own in formal discussion of complex issues, putting an articulate and persuasive argument, at no disadvantage to other speakers. Can advise on/handle complex, delicate or contentious issues, provided he/she has the necessary specialised knowledge. Can deal with hostile questioning confidently, hold on to his/her turn to speak and diplomatically rebut counter-arguments. (p. 87)

Note that this is a purely communicative goal rather than a goal set in terms 'language skills,' in the narrow sense of the term. In Japan, the CEFR has been incorporated extensively into TEFL. MEXT has adopted the thinking behind the CEFR and instructed schools to prepare their own lists of 'can-do' statements which teachers and students should refer to as they assess students' progress in English (MEXT, 2013). The thinking behind CLT provided theoretical bases for such new approaches as Content-Based Instruction (CBI), which attaches importance to content as the communicative purpose for language learners (see Snow, 2001, for a summary of major characteristics), and Content-and-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), an approach in which content and language are taught at the same time in an integrated way (see

Dalton-Puffer, 2011, for a review); there is a growing interest in CLIL among TEFL specialists in Japan (Watanabe et al., 2011, for example). A successful student who has learned English with a syllabus designed on CLIL principles is thus someone who has mastered both the content of a certain field and the language needed to discuss it.

As indicated by these developments in the history of language teaching, there have been different images of a successful language learner, each associated, loosely or closely, with a specific teaching method or way of thinking followed in TEFL.

Does TEFL in Japan address crises in communication?

At present, acquisition of an ability to communicate is regarded as key to successful language learning, and such an ability can hardly be considered real if it does not include both an ability to convey meaning and an ability to handle the sociolinguistic aspect of communicative situations. Failure to perform well in a communicative situation can easily put a language user into one of a variety of 'crises in communication.' Here are some of the familiar examples of such crises: In one-on-one interactions, understanding may be hindered because of lexical, grammatical, and/or phonological errors. A message may be distorted because the speaker mentions the bottom line too late. Misunderstanding may be caused by cultural assumptions which are not shared between the participants of an interaction. A speaker may be refuted by his or her interlocutor and cannot argue back. When one communicates with two or more individuals at the same time, all of the aforementioned kinds of crises may arise and, in addition, there is a possibility that one faces another type of crisis, namely a turn-taking problem: One may be unable to 'step in' when the other participants of the conversation are speaking with each other continuously. The foregoing are crises that concern oral communication, but crises will of course occur in writing and listening comprehension as well. Language teachers are responsible for trying to lower the risk of learners' facing these crises and to minimize their impact once they do arise.

Some aspects of the target language are stressed in TEFL in Japan while some are not. The residual influence of the grammar-translation method is strong, and grammatical training, reading comprehension and vocabulary build-up have occupied a central place in TEFL in Japan. For example, the 'Course of Study,' which is a set of guidelines published by MEXT and is to be followed by educators including teachers, local authorities and textbook writers, mentions specific grammatical structures in English and approximate numbers of vocabulary items in the language to be covered in junior and senior high school (MEXT 2017, 2018a). Learners' English-Japanese dictionaries label English words to indicate explicitly which ones they recommend

should be learned by junior high school students, which ones by senior high school students, etc. (Konishi and Minamide, 2014, for example).   By contrast, work in some areas of TEFL falls short of preparing learners for crises in communication.   One such area is argumentation.

Skills in critical thinking and argumentation

One may summarize the status quo as regards the teaching of argumentative skills by saying that there is only a limited measure of explicit instruction in what I would categorize as critical thinking skills, and, when it comes to argumentative skills, learners in Japan are being given virtually no instruction.   The following paragraphs provide the details of this situation.

Under the current Course of Study for senior high schools, revised in 2009 and put into effect in 2013, there are such subdivisions under the subject English as **English Communication** (**I**, **II** and **III**) and **English Expression** (**I** and **II**).   Specifications for items to be covered in those courses[7] include items such as exchanging opinions, drawing conclusions on the basis of information obtained, choosing a stance on a topic open to debate, etc. (MEXT, 2009).   In fact, the current version of the *Polestar English Communication* series, for example, which is a set of MEXT-authorized English language textbooks for high schools published by a private publishing house and meant to be used in the English Communication classes, includes at the end of every lesson in books I and II a section entitled 'Route Map,' which makes learners do a task of filling blanks in a table that summarizes the content of the text in that lesson (Matsusaka, 2017, 2018).

As regards *assessment* of English proficiency, there are occasions on which learners are tested on their ability to follow the logic of a text.   For example, the English language test prepared by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations in Japan has traditionally included a section in which applicants are invited to weed out unnecessary sentences from a passage.   Some of the past English language tests given as part of the University of Tokyo entrance examination (the 2020 version, for example) included a question in which applicants were told to read a passage with blanks and fill them with appropriate items from a set of sentences to choose from.

Looking at those teaching materials and test questions, one may be led to think that critical thinking *is* taught as a fairly important part of TEFL.   If so, the situation is in line with the general perception in CLT that communicative competence means more than just language.   Indeed, as Suzuki (2009, p. iii) put it, 'simple communicative exercises focusing on language production, such as those in conversational English, cannot provide the learner with sufficient communicative competence; acquisition of an

ability to analyze and discuss messages of social interest critically is essential' (translation by Matsusaka).   Nevertheless, the status quo is that the teaching of critical thinking skills and argumentative skills is not central to TEFL.   The level of the exercise in the MEXT-authorized textbook cited above is elementary.   Both in the case of the National Center for University Entrance Examinations test in English and in the case of the University of Tokyo entrance examination in English, the test questions that explicitly focus on critical thinking skills account only for a small portion of the entire score.[8]   Ways in which these university entrance examinations are written may affect the priorities that teachers give to classroom activities, with the possible result that discussion of logic is sidelined in the classwork.

As general skills in producing language are prerequisite to acquiring argumentative skills, the subject subdivision English Expression will be the subdivision most suited to the training of argumentative skills.   Magoku and Erikawa (2019) analyzed 11 English Expression I textbooks published by a total of four publishing houses[9] and found out that, of the exercise questions given in those textbooks, 81% are ones that concern linguistic forms, 4% are ones that require inferencing and 15% are ones that require an ability that they call 'critical thinking.'[10]

The situation mentioned above suggests that, although some importance is attached to critical thinking skills in TEFL in Japan, it is not on the centre stage.   One can also say that, even in the classwork where critical thinking *is* the theme, it is generally not taken to the level of argumentative skills.   This is serious, as learners of English with poor training may be disadvantaged when attempting to handle argumentative discourse in the future.

Education for international understanding

There may be a case for saying that the weak focus on argumentation in TEFL is partly a manifestation of the psyche running deep in Japanese society.   In fact, there is a theme in education that has been promoted as part of TEFL for about half a century which may suggest that such a psyche does exist: One of the pillars of school education in Japan is what is often called 'education for international understanding,' and foreign language teaching has been considered to be responsible for providing students with opportunities to receive education with that theme.   The cultural aspect of TEFL goes as far back as the early days after World War II: The 1947 Couse of Study said that one of the purposes of English language learning was to learn about the English-speaking people, about their customs and about their everyday life.   This basic policy did not change until 1969 and 1970, when the Course of Study for junior high schools and that for senior high schools were revised respectively and the aforementioned purpose of English teaching was replaced by the purpose of forming the

basis of international understanding (Koizumi, 2010).   The Course of Study for junior high schools currently in effect states that one of the purposes of foreign language education is to deepen students' understanding of the target language and the cultural background to that language (MEXT, 2008).   The same purpose is stated in the current Course of Study for senior high schools (MEXT, 2009).   The specific content of education for international understanding is not clear from these Course of Study stipulations, but, from the wording used in them, 'understanding of other cultures' seems to be the theme of overriding importance in education for international understanding, rather than preparing students for argumentation with those from other countries and/or cultures.

One gains the same impression from the activities carried out at schools where the theme 'international understanding' is explicitly stated.   The Japan Association for International Education has a database of examples of educational activities for international understanding, which carries 35 examples (Japan Association for International Education, 2020).   My assessment is that six of them have themes incorporating clash between different standpoints.   All the others aim at expansion of students' knowledge about other cultures, or sympathetic understanding of them, or both.   Also, the website of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has a section for development education and international understanding education, where examples of classwork are given.   Of the 60 examples under the category of senior high school education, there are no examples where argumentation, as I have defined it in this presentation, is taught (there is one case where part of the classwork is a role-playing exercise designed to teach how to turn down an offer or suggestion—an exercise which in a way concerns conflicting interests but certainly does not amount to argumentation).   All of the examples, including the one with the role-play exercise, are examples of classwork aimed at acquiring knowledge about other countries or disseminating knowledge about Japan to people in other countries (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2020).   Inadequacies in education for international understanding were mentioned by a study group in the Central Education Council, an advisory council at MEXT: It reported that problems with international education include tendencies that (a) it is equated with activities in the English class and (b) it is not developed beyond making students experience something or organizing activities for international exchanges (MEXT, 2005).

The situation that I have outlined seems to indicate that success in education for international understanding is considered by many stakeholders in education to consist primarily in success in having students learn about other countries and cultures and also helping the rest of the world to learn about Japan, rather than success in equipping students with an ability to solve differences with those from other countries and/or cultures through argumentation.   Education for international understanding as it is

being carried out today is immensely valuable and should be promoted even further, but perhaps a broadening of its scope is in order so that it also covers argumentation as a means of managing crises in international and cross-cultural communication.

The subject subdivision 'Logic and Expression'

Despite all of that, the teaching of English may soon make a new turn in Japan. Discussion centring on the need for a clearer focus on critical thinking education arose, particularly in the last decade.   Kusumi (2012) made a proposal at the 7 September 2012 meeting of the Central Education Council, in which he argued that critical thinking skills are 'the most important [ability] that high school students should be equipped with' (translation by Matsusaka) and cited Japanese, Civics, Mathematics and other subjects as examples of subjects in which students could develop critical thinking skills.   As if to put this idea into practice, MEXT revised the Course of Study in Japanese for senior high schools in 2018 and announced that a new subject subdivision focusing on logic would be started under the subject Japanese.   The subdivision will be called **Logical Japanese** (translation by Matsusaka), and its objective will be 'to aim to foster an ability and skills in accurate comprehension and effective expression in Japanese' (MEXT, 2018b, translation by Matsusaka).   Before the revision of the Corse of Study, however, a move towards an emphasis of logic in the subject Japanese may already have started in the classroom.   One study guide in Japanese for high school students includes exercises in following the logic when reading a passage, such as exercises in distinguishing between the concrete and the abstract, locating expressions of concession, etc.[11]   Some space in the book is devoted to the training in asserting one's opinions (Nanba et al., 2017).

In 2018, the same year as the year of the publication of the aforementioned Course of Study in Japanese, MEXT published a new Course of Study for senior high schools for the subject English.   It provided that a new subject subdivision in English by the name of **Logic and Expression** (**I**, **II** and **III**) (translation by Matsusaka) should be introduced in April 2021 (MEXT, 2018a).   Publishing companies have put together their textbooks for this subdivision and presented them to MEXT for authorization.   I am unable to comment on the content of these textbooks because, at the moment, the inspection process is not finished yet at MEXT and the content of the books has not been made public.   Nevertheless, I can report on the content of this subdivision as specified in the Course of Study.   The content is divided into three levels, I, II and III, meant to be taught typically in the first, second and third years of senior high school respectively.

The objectives of this subdivision have been stipulated for three areas: interaction, presentation and writing (MEXT, 2018a, pp. 87-120).   In all of these areas, the aim is

to enable students to convey a message about an everyday topic or a topic of social interest to others or to each other, by presenting the message with an appropriate logical structure or an appropriate path of logical development.   In the area of interaction, students are to learn to participate in a debate or discussion; in the area of presentation, they are to learn to give a speech or presentation; in the area of writing, they are to learn to write one or more paragraphs.

As students approach and finally reach the highest level, Logic and Expression III, they are to learn to make use of multiple materials such as news reports or newspaper articles to support their opinions and to use a wide range of phrases and sentences that fit their purpose, in an attempt to persuade their interlocutor or reader.   They are to learn to make their message well organized, and, in the area of writing, they are to learn to produce a text consisting of multiple paragraphs.

The above description of the subject subdivision applies to the ordinary curriculum, offered by most senior high schools across the country.   Apart from this curriculum, there are special curricula offered by some high schools: vocational courses, such as ones in agriculture, commerce, fishery and nursing, and specialized courses, such as ones in science and mathematics, physical education, music and art.   One such specialized course is a course in English, and students enrolled in this course naturally follow a curriculum with a heavy concentration on English.   With the start of the instruction under the new Course of Study, the curriculum in this English course will include a subject subdivision **Debate and Discussion** (**I** and **II**) (MEXT, 2018a, pp. 190-201).   The objectives of this subdivision include enabling students:

(a) to assume a position for or against a proposition and present a logically coherent argument in an attempt to persuade others;
(b) to show effectively how their own opinions are superior to others' and to ask questions or present counterarguments in an attempt to persuade them;
(c) to advance their own opinions in an attempt to reach a consensus with others on a solution to a problem;
(d) to propose solutions with persuasive reasons so as to reach an agreement with others on the best solution to a problem.

Thus, at least from the stipulations in the new Course of Study, it appears that TEFL in senior high school education in Japan will change so that greater importance will be attached to combining training in the target language and training in the use of logic.

There are two concerns about the effectiveness of the new policy, however. First, Logic and Expression I, II and III will be introduced in the senior high school curriculum in 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively, and instruction at level III, which

covers logical use of English in earnest, will not start until 2023.　At the moment, it is thus too early to predict how effective the whole three-level sequence will be.　Second, while the Course of Study will be reflected in the content of the MEXT-authorized textbooks, it is unclear how much of the content will actually be learned by students. Senior high school classwork tends to be affected to various degrees by what university entrance examinations cover.　Therefore, unless universities begin to prepare more English-language entrance examination questions designed to measure applicants' ability to use logic in English, some high school teachers and students may not be motivated to direct much attention to the content or spirit of the new Course of Study. On the other hand, there is cause for optimism:　As the volume of international communication increases and awareness keeps growing among the general public of the value of English language skills accompanied by argumentative skills, TEFL may change over time so that the emphasis will shift from teaching the language in the narrow sense of the term to helping learners to acquire the language as it is combined with skills in critical thinking and argumentation.

Attempt to teach critical thinking and argumentation: An example

Having outlined the situation at the senior high school level, I now turn to university-level TEFL.　As MEXT-authorized textbooks are not used at university-level, and instructors for many university classes have more latitude in deciding what to teach than secondary school teachers, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what is being taught in university English classes.　Rather than attempt to present an overall picture of education in critical thinking or argumentation at university level in Japan, I would like to describe some of the challenges I myself faced in the past as I set up a debate course in the curriculum of the English department where I taught, for I think that my case epitomizes some potential problems involved in the teaching of argumentative skills as a way of teaching English.

It was in the year 2000 that I started teaching a debate course at my university. Around that time, I was noticing that the term 'debate' was sometimes used loosely in the description of courses in English in which students were engaged in informal conversations over controversial issues (such as the merit of making secondary school students wear a school uniform).　I ruled out the possibility of teaching such a course as I doubted that students would really acquire argumentative skills through unstructured talk.　On the other hand, I wanted to avoid teaching formal debating, too, at least at the beginning of the course, because I thought that teaching it would mean making students spend a certain amount of time learning about the rules and the format

of the game, honing skills in speaking within the time limit, etc., which would not be the same as learning about argumentation per se.

So I chose to organize a sequence of two semesters: a critical thinking and argumentation course in the first semester and a course in formal debating in the second. The syllabus for the first semester included the following topics:

(1) Introduction to the course
(2) Talking about assumptions
(3) Talking about assumptions, contd.
(4) Dealing with figures
(5) Using quotations
(6) Analysis of the status quo

(7) Carrying arguments far
(8) Pointing out contradictions
(9) Explaining a seeming contradiction
(10) Solvency
(11) Analogy
(12) Fallacies

Most of the topics were dealt with in the framework of the Toulmin model (Toulmin, 1964), which was applied to many of the exercises in its skeletal form—what I called the debate triangle, with the three corners representing the claim, the data and the warrant—and with technical terminology kept to the minimum (I used the word 'reason' to refer to the 'data' and the word 'assumption' to refer to the 'warrant'). The exercises required students to examine the acceptability of a proposition and argue a case for or against it. Here are three examples of the exercises:

Example 1 (centres around a fictitious situation in which a brilliant scientist, a young girl and an old man are stranded on a desert island after a shipwreck and find a small boat that can take only one person; concerns topics 2 and 3 above)

Question 1: Who should escape from the island in the boat?

Question 2 (*if students choose the scientist as the answer to Question 1, for example*): Why?

Question 3 (*if students' answer to Question 2 is that the scientist is more likely to contribute to humankind through inventions or scientific discoveries than the others, for example*): What assumptions are hidden behind that argument?

Question 4: If you are trying to refute the above proposition and have come up with the following two assumptions, which one is more useful for you? (a) The scientist can row the boat; (b) The sea will not dry up during the scientist's journey.

It was my observation that, after learning about the debate triangle mentioned above, students were usually able to answer Question 3 with ease. Question 4 took slightly more time to answer: Students sometimes needed to be told, before being able to choose (a), that the more disputable an assumption is, the more useful it is in refuting the proposition.

Question 5: Present a hidden assumption on your own which you think would be most useful for refutation.

In response to this last question, one may say, for example, that one assumption hidden behind the argument is that the value of a person's life should be judged by the kinds of contributions that he or she could make to humankind. It is a useful assumption because one could argue that it is based on an ethically questionable view that people's lives can be arranged in order of importance.

Through exercises of this kind students learned about argumentation and language simultaneously.   Some of the lexicalized sentence stems (Pawley and Syder, 1983) that can be taught in the course of these exchanges are:

What make-TENSE *you say that*/(clause)*?*

Your argument be-TENSE *based on an assumption, which is* (clause)*.*

Are you sure the assumption is correct?

Your argument be-TENSE *based on an assumption which is incorrect* (or: *unacceptable*, *questionable*, etc.).

Example 2 (centres around an argument that science education should be made completely free of charge because it makes our country rich; concerns topic 7)

Question: How would you refute the argument by taking it far?

To answer the above question, one can point out, for example, that, if the argument were carried far, it could mean (a) that the learning of all subjects would have to be made free of charge because students in any field of academic study could make a country rich (e.g. music education may produce musicians who can sell their music abroad), (b) that all textbooks would have to be made free, and (c) that even shoes that students wear to school would have to be made free.   Relevant sentence stems would include:

If you carried that argument far, you would have to say (clause).

What you are saying is really the same thing as (clause).

Example 3 (centres around an argument that, as a person's life is invaluable, someone who takes someone else's life deserves the death penalty; concerns topics 8 and 9):

Question: Would you say that the above argument involves a contradiction?   If yes, explain your answer.   If no, explain your answer.

It was my observation that, while the 'yes' answer was easy for students to explain, for obvious reasons, the 'no' answer was not.   They needed to learn to say that there is no contradiction in the argument because (a) the criminality of murder is based upon an assumption that it is bad for *a private individual* to take someone else's life whereas (b) the justice of the death penalty is based upon an assumption that *the government* can take someone's life as a form of punishment.

Some of the sentence stems that can be taught are:
I think you are contradicting yourself.
You say (clause), *but you also say* (clause).   *These points contradict each other.*
There is no contradiction in what I am saying because the point (clause) *means* (clause or NP) *and the point* (clause) *means* (clause or NP).

Challenges

There were four sorts of challenges that I faced as I taught the course which will be worth reporting here.   First, it was sometimes difficult to help students (a) to find assumptions behind an argument, (b) to evaluate them from the opponent arguer's point of view and (c) to produce an assumption most useful for refutation.   For instance, in Example 1 above, some students made irrelevant points in response to Question 3, such as: 'The island is very small,' or 'The scientist is famous.'   I had them try turning the sentences into the negative and see if the argument still stands.   For example, I asked whether the argument is still valid if the island is not small or if the scientist is not famous.   These interactions did help students to distinguish between real assumptions and irrelevant sentences, but the interactions were time-consuming.   Some students did find some assumptions successfully but were unable to evaluate them and had difficulty in answering Question 4.   But by far the greatest difficulty that students experienced was in being original and coming up with a sentence which would serve as a *useful* assumption, such as the one given above as a response to Question 5.   I have yet to find a teaching procedure whereby a teacher could methodically help students to work out such an assumption.

Secondly, I had difficulty in accumulating useful sentence stems.[12]   The more specific the topic taken up in class was, the less applicable the expressions related to it were to other topics and therefore the less worthwhile it seemed to be to have students memorize them for future use.

Thirdly, when students were having difficulty responding to a question that I put to them, the cause of the difficulty was not clear-cut: It could have been (a) their lack of language skills, (b) their lack of analytical skills, (c) their lack of argumentative skills or (d) a combination of two or all three of them.   I was unable to provide appropriate feedback until the cause was clear.

Fourthly, it was not easy to arrange the exercises in order of difficulty.   This issue is closely related to the third kind of challenge mentioned above: As the level of difficulty of an exercise depended upon at least three factors, namely (a) the language, (b) students' analytical ability and (c) their argumentative skills, what exercise was difficult for them to what extent in general seemed to be an insoluble question.

Concluding remarks

I have discussed argumentation as an area of TEFL where more attention is needed if learners are to learn to cope with crises in communication. For improving the quality of TEFL in that direction, two lines of research seem to be called for.

First, it will be necessary to ascertain the cause of the present situation in Japan as regards education in argumentation: Argumentation has never been treated as a key element in education; use of 'logic' will be covered in TEFL in Japan under the newest Course of Study in English, but the extent of the Ministry's commitment to education in *argumentation* is unclear. This state of affairs may be a reflection of the mindset still prevalent in Japanese society; in fact, Suzuki (2019) pointed out some concrete manifestations of this. It is possible that, as argumentation as a decision-making process has not yet taken root in many parts of Japanese society, no sense of urgency is being felt in educational circles as yet about teaching it. Whatever the cause, shedding light on it will be the first step to changing the situation.

Secondly, in the TEFL community, it will be necessary to search for ways to establish and refine a new type of TEFL in which language skills and argumentative skills are combined as the general aim. It would be a subcategory of CLIL and could even be called 'argumentation and language integrated learning,' to name it after its superordinate concept. My own attempt in this regard, which I outlined above, is only of an experimental nature. Work needs to be done so that (a) aspects of argumentative skills are sorted out and organized into a syllabus and (b) specific expressions in learners' target language are assigned to the items in the syllabus (despite the fourth kind of challenge mentioned in the previous section).

Whichever of the two lines of research one is to embark on, one needs to be aware of the danger of confusion in conceptualization, especially in the Japanese context. As I have pointed out in this presentation, the word 'logic' is used frequently in the newest version of the Course of Study for senior high schools to refer to a concept that encompasses both thinking critically and communicating thoughts. Debate, discussion and presentations are mentioned in it as suggested activities, but there are no explicit instructions that debate, as opposed to other activities, must be taught. From the way in which the Course of Study treats the teaching of the use of logic, some may surmise that the distinction between argumentation and critical thinking is not of essential importance. I would contend that, on the contrary, this distinction is actually at the very heart of the issue here. In order to handle crises in communication, learners of English need to do more than just think critically: They need to be prepared to face their antagonists. It is therefore crucial in conducting either of the two lines of research that the focus should be on argumentation, namely 'a social activity directed at other people' (Eemeren and Snoeck Henkemans, 2017, p 1), rather than on critical

thinking, which in theory could take place without an element of communication (although it is admittedly impossible to argue without mobilizing critical thinking skills).

In Japan—and the situation will not be much different elsewhere in the non-English speaking part of the world—there is a growing need for TEFL aimed at crisis management in communication. We teachers have the responsibility for identifying the skills that learners need for crisis management. The TEFL policy of the Japanese Government has started to change, but the question is to what extent and at what speed the day-to-day work in the classroom at schools and universities across the country can change.

Notes

1. This topic was originally discussed in Matsusaka (2017) and Maeda and Matsusaka (2006).

2. I am basically following Dewey (1910) who said 'Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought" (p. 6) and ' . . . uncritical thinking [is] the minimum of reflection" (p. 13). The definition presented by the Foundation for Critical Thinking is in line with the above conceptualization: 'Critical thinking is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it' (Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2020).

3. I am basically following Eemeren and Snoeck Henkemans (2017, chapters 1 and 2). In argumentation, there is an element of communication: The arguer has another party with whom he or she needs to communicate.

4. Statistical Survey on Education (Ministry of Education, 2020a).

5. This ministry was reorganized subsequently, in 2001, into what is now the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

6. There have been various theses about the components of communicative competence. See the following table.

Chomsky (1957, 1965)	Hymes (1967, 1972)	Canale and Swain (1980)	Canale (1983)	Celce-Mercia et al. (1995)	Celce-Mercia (2008)
Linguistic Competence	Linguistic Competence	Grammatical Competence	Grammatical Competence	Linguistic Competence	Linguistic Competence
					Formulaic Competence
	Sociolinguistic Competence	Strategic Competence	Strategic Competence	Strategic Competence	Strategic Competence
		Sociolinguistic Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence
				Actional Competence	Interactional Competence: (How to interrupt, etc.)
					(Body language)
			Discourse Competence	Discourse Competence	Discourse Competence

Based on the illustration on p. 43, which covers the period 1957-1995, and on the discussion on pp. 46-50, which corresponds to the 2008 column, in Celce-Murcia (2008).

7. Of the three levels of the subdivision, **English Communication I** shall cover '[d]iscussing and exchanging opinions on information, ideas, etc., based on what one has heard, read, learned and experienced,' **English Communication II** shall cover '[d]rawing conclusions through discussion, etc., on information, ideas, etc. based on what one has heard, read, learned and experienced' and **English Communication III** shall further develop what is listed under 'English Communication II.' The objective of **English Expression I** shall be '[t]o develop students' abilities to evaluate facts, opinions, etc. from multiple perspectives and communicate through reasoning and a range of expression, while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language'; **English Expression II** shall cover '[e]xpressing what one wants to say in a coherent and logical manner' and '[d]eciding a stance on a topic open to a range of debates, organizing an argument, and exchanging opinions so as to persuade others'; moreover, as examples of functions of language to be covered in all the subdivisions under the subject English, the Course of Study lists 'offering, agreeing, disagreeing, asserting, inferring and assuming,' under the general heading '[e]xpressing opinions and intensions' (MEXT, 2020b).

8. In the case of the University of Tokyo entrance examination, the weight of these questions is not made public but, it can be assumed not to be great from the length of the entire test.

9. It is common for a publishing house to publish multiple textbooks for the same subject aiming at students at various levels.

10. Critical thinking, as the term is used in Magoku and Erikawa (2019), means 'creatively comment on the truth value of the information given in a text, analyze or evaluate the information, or state an attitude or way of thinking in response to a question given in the text' (translation by Matsusaka).   In fact, they cite the following question as an example of critical thinking questions:

Substitute your own words for the underlined parts of the following sentence and state what you yourself do for the protection of the environment (translation by Matsusaka).

I <u>recycle my waste paper</u> in order to <u>save forests</u> [in order not to <u>destroy forests</u>.]

This definition is broader than the definition of the same term as I am using it in this presentation.   On the other hand, what is called an exercise in inferencing in that study may be assumed to be one that requires what I call critical thinking.   In any event, regardless of how great a discrepancy there is between the different definitions in question, one can say, on the basis of what was discovered by Magoku and Erikawa (2019), that, of all the exercise questions found in English Expression I textbooks, the proportion of ones that test what I call critical thinking skills is only 19% at the very most, which means that the proportion of questions that test their argumentative skills must be even smaller.

11. The following is a list of exercises given in the book:

(1) reading a passage and identifying the audience;

(2) finding a part of a passage where the author's point is rephrased or summarized;

(3) identifying the problem that the author wants to address;

(4) distinguishing between the concrete and the abstract;

(5) finding items contrasted against each other;

(6) finding a cause-and-effect relation between points made in a passage;

(7) interpreting graphs and tables;

(8) identifying contentions, reasons and concrete examples;

(9) identifying contentions, reasons, concrete examples and hidden assumptions;

(10) locating expressions of concession;

(11) using deduction and induction.

12. I am referring to expressions related to specific topics like the ones I covered in the syllabus presented here rather than more general expressions found in argumentative discourse such as the ones identified by Eemeren, Houtlosser and Snoeck Henkemans (2007).

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