コミュニケティブな言語教授法を促進するための中学校英語教科書
－検定教科書*Sunshine*の使用事例研究を通して－

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The Role of Junior High School English Textbooks in Communicative Language Teaching

Based on a Case Study of Two Junior High School Teachers Teaching *Sunshine*

1. Introduction

Making English education in Japan more communication-centered has received attention since 1974 (Torikae, 2014). In the 1980s, education policy by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) began to make provisions in its Course of Study (National English Curriculum) for secondary school English to make developing learners' communicative skills a primary objective (LoCastro, 1996). However, numerous researchers have found that MEXT policy has not had its hoped-for effect on English education in Japan because of its incompatibility with the school context (A partial list of such research is Aspinall, 2006; Butler, 2011; Gorsuch, 2000; Humphries & Burns, 2015; Nishino & Watanabe, 2008; Sakui, 2004).

Although policy changes have not met expectations, it would be misleading to say that they have not had an effect. For example, research by Hall (2014a, 2014b) shows how teachers navigate contextual constraints to incorporate an element of communication into their students' English learning. Furthermore, there are various practical books on communicative methodologies for English teachers (For example, see Miura, Nakashima, & Ikeoka, 2006; Nakashima, 2000; Takeshima, 2011). Thus, rather than add to the literature describing the weaknesses of English education in Japan, this study seeks to describe how junior high school English teachers interpret and then adapt MEXT approved textbooks to develop students' communicative abilities. Through doing this, from the perspective of using MEXT authorized textbooks, we hope that we can elucidate the challenges that teachers face in developing students' communicative abilities and how they overcome these challenges.

2. Overview of Teaching Materials and English Education in Japan

This section will give an overview of the role of the textbook in English language teaching (ELT), English education policy in Japan, and the role the textbook plays in enacting the policy.

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2.1 The Role of the Textbook in English Language Teaching

According to Richards (2014), the textbook is the primary teaching resource for many of the world's teachers. It determines students' activities, class goals, and content. Whether textbooks benefit or inhibit classroom instruction has been debated by researchers in the field of material development. Tomlinson (2011) summarizes the views of both the proponents and opponents. Proponents argue that the textbook can provide the learner with security, a learning system, progress, and revision. Additionally, it can save time for the teachers and support their lessons. On the other hand, opponents argue that textbooks might also have a disempowering effect by not being able to take into consideration the precise needs of the teachers and learners in a certain context. As Fosnot puts it, "an empowered teacher is a reflective decision maker who finds joy in learning and in investigating the teaching/learning process-one who views learning as construction and teaching as a facilitating process to enhance and enrich development" (cited in Taggart & Wilson, 2005, p. 1). Littlejohn (2011) calls materials a pedagogical device, which can be an aid to teach and to learn a foreign language. Similarly, Tomlinson (2011) argues that textbooks should be seen as resources rather than just mere "scripts" (p.272). Therefore, teachers can make the best out of a textbook if they adapt it to the needs of their own context instead of adopting the material as it is.

2.2 ELT in Japan from the Perspective of the Course of Study

The Course of Study in Japan plays a central role from the point of view of textbooks. Groups of academics and teachers write the textbooks in strict accordance with the Course of Study. In junior high school, the overall objective for foreign language is "to develop students' basic communication abilities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, deepening their understanding of language and culture and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages" (MEXT, 2008). The four objectives for English correlate with each of the four skills (ibid.):

(1) To enable students to understand the speakers' intentions when listening to English.
(2) To enable students to talk about their own thoughts using English.
(3) To accustom and familiarize students with reading English and to enable them to understand the writer's intentions when reading English.
(4) To accustom and familiarize students with writing in English and to enable them to write about their own thoughts using English.

After the objectives, types of language activities for each skill, recommendations for instruction, ideas for language use situations, specific grammar and vocabulary that should be taught, and suggestions for lesson plan design and treatment of the contents are introduced. Concerning grammar, the Course of Study emphasizes that it should be learned through communicative language activities and teachers should demonstrate the actual use of grammatical items instead of giving detailed explanation (MEXT, 2008). This seems to be in accordance with the main principle of communicative language teaching (CLT), which stipulates that the aim of language learning is to learn to communicate rather than learn bits of language (Littlewood, 2011).

One of the textbooks that have been designed to meet the requirements of the Course of Study and encourage active communication in the classroom is the *Sunshine* series (Niisato & authors, 2011), a commonly used Japanese junior high school textbook (Gakusho, 2012). The textbook, published by Kairyudo, was approved by MEXT in 2011 and is

currently on its third edition. As written in the guidebook introducing *Sunshine*, the main objectives of the textbooks are to convey new English education through a new textbook as well as to make students acquire communication skills through usage (Kairyudo, 2012). The publisher states that the textbook focuses on the balance and interrelation between the four basic skills.

2.3 ELT Practice in Japan and the Use of the Textbook

As we have argued above, the current Course of Study takes a communicative approach on teaching English. However, due to various circumstances, effectively putting the communicative policy into actual practice faces some difficulties.

One of these limitations is the lack of English use in the classrooms, both by the students and the teachers. According to a survey carried out among 9,726 high school teachers by MEXT, 48.5% of the students use English in less than half of the oral communication activities, and only 15.6% of them use mostly English (2010). The same survey also showed that in oral communication classes only 52.4% of the teachers conduct more than half of their classes in English, while 47.6% of them use English in less than half. Among the participants 6.4% claimed that they barely use English to conduct oral communication activities (MEXT, 2010).

Another challenge for the realization of the communicative approach in the classrooms is the insufficient training of teachers. According to Tahira (2012), many English teachers lack training and/or confidence in their English skills, or just simply misinterpret the concept of CLT. As of yet, "the teaching principles advocated by MEXT are not fully practiced and understood by teachers" (Tahira, 2012, p. 3).

A third problem is that entrance exams are not believed to be compatible with communicative teaching (Butler, 2011). However, studies of university entrance exams have shown that there are few grammar and translation questions (Senior High School English Classroom Reform Project, 2015). Additionally, the standard high school entrance exam for the prefecture in which this study was conducted has a listening section. Nevertheless, many teachers believe that communicative methodologies will not prepare students for entrance exams (Underwood, 2012).

Being aware of the above mentioned difficulties, one might wonder if textbooks which emphasize the development of communicative skills could be a means of change. To address this question, Humphries (2014) investigated how a technical college (*kosen*) used newly adopted international textbooks with a focus on communication. In his year-long case study, he found that the teachers were not able to use the textbooks in the intended way. Many of the factors behind this were similar to the reasons why CLT has not worked in Japanese schools. The factors he found were local cultural values, teacher's confidence, training and experience, external factors (tests), school level factors, classroom factors, and the textbook itself.

2.4 Research Questions

Overall, we have discussed the importance of the textbook and how skillful teachers adapt rather than adopt the textbook. In Japan, the junior high school textbook is strictly written in accordance with the Course of Study, which emphasizes the development of students' communicative skills. Previous research has shown factors for why teachers in general struggle to adopt CLT and implement communicative textbooks. There is, however, little research on how the teachers make use of the new, more communicative textbooks in the Japanese junior high school context. Therefore, we will address the following research questions:

1. What features does the textbook *Sunshine* contain to meet the requirements of the present Course of Study?
2. How do participant teachers of the case study perceive and implement certain features of the textbook into their everyday teaching practice?
3. What classroom practices do the participants employ to supplement the textbook?

3. Method

3.1 Participants and School

In the case study, the English classes of two experienced junior high school English teachers working in the same school were observed. Sakura (a pseudonym) was a first grade homeroom teacher to a class of 35 students. She was also in charge of teaching 4 first grade English classes, each meeting 4 times a week. The other participant, Shouta (a pseudonym) was the homeroom teacher for a second grade class of 30 students. He was responsible for teaching 4 English classes which also met 4 times a week respectively.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

Over a span of one month (November to December, 2014), the first author observed Sakura and Shouta's English instruction of their respective homeroom classes. A total of nine homeroom English classes for each teacher were observed. Most classes lasted approximately 50 minutes. During the observation, data was collected by taking video and making field notes based on the recordings (except for three cases, when there were no videos taken). The field notes were made based on three criteria: the main flow of the lesson, the methods and techniques used in the classroom, and additional remarks (such as given time limit, ways of praising, extra care given for pronunciation etc.).

After the observation period was over, semi-structured interviews were carried out with both participants. A questionnaire of twenty-two questions was created based on the textbook selection ideas of Littlejohn (2011), Byrd (2001), Garinger (2002), and Tomlinson (2011). Both participants received the list of questions (see Appendix 1) before the actual interview to let them think of their ideas and opinions regarding their lessons and the textbook. At the time of the actual interview, follow-up questions were posed to delve deeper into topics. Both interviews were recorded by voice recorder for further analysis.

As part of data collection, classroom artifacts such as the first and second volumes of the *Sunshine* textbook (3rd edition), and the classroom worksheets were also examined. Table 1 shows the summary of the collected data:

Table 1: Summary of Data Collection

Name	Class	No. of field notes	No. of videos	No. of interviews
Sakura	Grade 1 Homeroom	9	9	1
Shouta	Grade 2 Homeroom	9	6	1
Total		18	15	2

3.3 Data Analysis

To investigate what features *Sunshine* contains to meet the requirements set by the current Course of Study for lower secondary education, the official guide booklet issued by Kairyudo called *Guidebook of Junior High School English Textbook for 2012* (2012) and a pamphlet called *The Future Objectives of Kairyudo in English Education* (2011) were used. The main features of the textbook according to the aforementioned documents were set in parallel with the guidelines set by the Course of Study.

To answer the question of how the teachers implemented certain features of the textbook into their classes, the field notes, the classroom recordings, and the semi-structured interview audio recordings were examined. To organize the data, the first author categorized the interview answers into the following categories: (1) adaptability, (2) motivation of the students, (3) the structure of the book, (4) the topics, (5) the tasks and activities, (6) pronunciation, (7) motivation of the teacher, and (8) the Teacher's Manual. Classroom recordings and the field notes were used to substantiate the teachers' answers.

To answer the question of how the participants supplemented the textbook, new categories were created based on the issues the teachers had using the textbook. Categories were determined from the teachers' interview transcripts and substantiated using the first author's field notes. The categories were: (1) making the book more motivating, (2) making the activities more interesting, (3) need for more review, (4) need for more vocabulary practice, (5) more support on pronunciation, intonation, punctuation, (6) too easy listening tasks, (7) making students think and use their background knowledge, (8) more engaging lesson ideas in the Teacher's Manual, and (9) more useful support materials. By determining these issues, it was then possible to ascertain how the teachers supplemented the textbook to overcome them.

4. Analysis

4.1 Comparison between *Sunshine* and the Current Course of Study

This section will compare the following *Sunshine* features with the current Course of Study: the main objectives, the basic structure, the topics, pronunciation, dictionary usage, grammar, vocabulary. It should be noted that all citations of *Sunshine* related documents are the authors' translations.

4.1.1 The main objectives, basic structure, and topics of Sunshine

To foster the students' positive attitude towards learning foreign languages and learning English, *Sunshine* had been designed to repeatedly give students the experience of success. For instance, the regular *My Project* sections of the textbook aim to set feasible goals for the students arranged in a step-by-step manner. Through doing these "projects," students can monitor their progress in learning to use the language taught in the book as well as review the content they have learned. An example of *My Project* tasks are self-introduction (1st year), future dreams (2nd year) as well as agreement and disagreement (2nd year), which can be seen as a parallel to the desires of the government to enhance "the understanding of various ways of viewing and thinking, fostering the ability to make impartial judgments" (MEXT, 2008). By the end of the third year of junior high school, students also learn how to explain about traditional culture which correlates with deepening their understanding "of the ways of life and cultures of foreign countries and Japan, raising interest in language and culture and developing respectful attitudes toward these" (MEXT, 2008).

Figure 1 shows an example of a program, or unit, in *Sunshine*. A program usually consists of a new structure section followed by a reading section repeated two to three times. Following a program are *Power-up Series* sections, which target one of the four skills. Apart from the *Power-up Series*, extra grammar or pronunciation review sections are also offered. In the new grammar section, students are first exposed to a new form in the *Basic Dialogue*, which is designed to demonstrate the minimal level of usage that students should acquire. Next, students do a listening exercise to understand how the new form is used. After that, there is a speaking exercise where students practice the structure in drills. Last, is the *Let's try* activity where students use the structure in interaction. Following this is a reading section consisting of a reading comprehension activity and a short writing exercise. It should be noted that there are substantial variations in the structure of programs.

Figure 1: A Sample Program: *Sunshine* 2, Program 1

Approximate Number of Classes	Section Content
1	New Grammar Structure Basic Dialogue → Listen → Practice → Use
1	Reading Reading Comprehension → Writing Task
4	New Grammar Structure and Reading repeat 2 times.
1 ～ 2	Power-up Writing 1
1	How English Works (Eigo no shikumi)

As for the topics of the books, the current Course of Study advises teachers to choose a variety of topics which are suitable and interesting for the given age group, and suggests that they cover topics in connection with "the daily lives, manners and customs, stories, geography, history, traditional cultures and natural science of the people of the world, focusing on English-speaking people and the Japanese people" (MEXT, 2008). Therefore the *Sunshine* textbooks touch upon topics such as environmental problems (e.g. "If You Wish to See a Change" /2nd year/; "The 5 Rs to Save the Earth" /3rd year/), cross-cultural understanding (e.g. "International Food Festival" /1st year/; "So Many Countries, So Many Customs" /2nd year/), or the understanding of Japanese traditions and culture (e.g. "Origami" /1st year/; "Sushi-Go-Around in the World" /3rd year/; "Ler's Talk About Things Japanese" /3rd year/). Furthermore, in the 2nd grade and 3rd grade after every three *Programs* there is a special reading section which is designed to act as a means for moral education by "nurturing rich hearts" and "encouraging students to think about others' way of life through touching their emotions" (Kairyudo, 2012). These readings include topics such as "A Shelter for Pet Animals" in the 2nd year, or "Mother Teresa" in the 3rd year.

4.1.2 Pronunciation, dictionary usage, grammar and vocabulary

The Course of Study also includes information about how pronunciation should be handled in the classroom, and that the differences between English and Japanese pronunciation should be paid careful attention to. It is also stated that phonetic notation can be added by the teacher at times when it is needed. To improve students' pronunciation, *Sunshine* contains repetitive pronunciation practice by listening to the CD, including tasks such as following rhythm (*Rizumu ni awasete ittemiyou*). At the bottom of most pages the book provides short notes on pronunciation, and in the *Power-up Series* there is a section called *Pronunciation Clinic (Hatsuon Kurinikku)*. Furthermore, the individual

pronunciation practice of students is supported by a five-level reading out loud checkbox after each reading.

The Course of Study also emphasizes that "students should familiarize themselves with how to use dictionaries in order to make good use of them" (MEXT, 2008). Therefore, in *Sunshine* there is a page to adapt students to the structure and usage of an English-Japanese dictionary (1st year), the difference between various parts of speech and words with multiple meanings (2nd year), and phrasal verbs (3rd year). The textbook also includes smaller activities concerning dictionary usage such as looking up words in connection with a reading. Phonetic notations are included next to the vocabulary items in the appendix, but they are only shown in the *Programs* from the 2nd year.

The Course of Study states that grammar underpins communication and should be taught in a way where grammar can effectively be used for communication. It also instructs teachers not to focus on explaining grammatical terms and differences between usages, but rather put emphasis on the actual use of certain grammatical elements. This objective is reflected in the approach taken by *Sunshine*, namely that a grammatical item is introduced at the beginning of a section through a simple example and supported by short and concise explanations in Japanese. Then the given grammatical item is acquired by the students through multiple steps, and later on revised in the *How English Works (Eigo no shikumi)* and *My Project* sections of the book. Furthermore, *Sunshine* calls attention to word order by introducing color coding for the different parts of speech in the revision sections, thus making students aware "of the differences between English and Japanese in terms of word order, modification relation and other aspects" (MEXT, 2008).

In order to make the English vocabulary bank of the students reach the approximately 1200 words set by MEXT, *Sunshine* includes many conversations and some *Power-up readings* in the 1st year, while the dialogues are accompanied by more readings during the 2nd and 3rd years. There are also some *Review Reading* texts in the books to deepen the understanding of the contents of certain units, and during the 3rd year there are three *Extensive Readings*, to make students get used to longer texts included in entrance examinations. The words chosen for the texts and activities are all words that are frequently used in English (Kairyudo, 2012), and new words are listed next to the readings, accompanied by a check-box for students to assess their knowledge.

4.2 Teachers' Perceptions of the Features of *Sunshine*

In the following section, to investigate how the participant teachers use and perceive the textbook, the major points of the interviews will be touched upon and supported by examples given by the teachers.

4.2.1 Adaptability and motivation for students

Sakura clearly stated that the book is easy for students to follow because it contains a grammatical point, followed by listening, practicing, and using the item as well as other activities. She also mentioned that the Japanese version of the basic dialogue could help weaker students understand the flow of the lesson to a great extent, and that the book creates opportunities for students to teach each other, for instance by using the word cards at the end of their books more-advanced students can teach lower level students. Shouta said that in his opinion, every textbook is adaptable for every student; it only depends on the teacher's ideas.

The two teachers' opinions concerning whether the textbook is motivating for the students differed. Sakura said that if she had to choose between saying 'yes' or 'no', she would say *Sunshine* is a motivating book for students, especially the *My Project* parts. However, she also added that the textbook does not matter that much when it comes to the motivation of the students. Shouta stated that he does not find the textbook, itself, very motivating for students;

however, by giving them achievable tasks, their motivation can be improved remarkably.

4.2.2 Structure and review

As for the structure of the book, both teachers shared the opinion that it is clearly organized and easy to follow. Shouta pointed out that because of the clearly divided grammar and reading sections, the book is easy to teach. For the same reason, both teachers agreed that this book would be easy to follow even for a novice teacher. When asked whether the book feels routine-like after a while, Sakura said that for her and lower-level students it is good, because they know what to do, but she also expressed her uncertainty that for higher level students it might not be so interesting, since they are required to do the same thing every day.

The interview also asked about the amount of reviewing included in the structure of the books. Both teachers seemed to agree that the amount of review in the book is not enough, but Shouta also added that the three projects enable students to go over previous material.

4.2.3 Topics, tasks and activities, pronunciation

Another focus of the interviews was the teachers' opinions about the topics included in the book. In her interview, Sakura mentioned that some of the topics in the textbook are interesting and useful for students, these include: origami, international food festivals, new students, and new friends. However, both teachers agreed that some of the topics might be too difficult for the students and might not be appropriate for this age group. Sakura mentioned that topics such as recycling might be too challenging for 1st year junior high school students, and also added that some of the topics are difficult to explain for the teacher, since even the Internet contains very limited information about them. As a specific example the Kachina doll (*Sunshine 1*, p.107) was mentioned. In addition, Shouta expressed his opinion that some of the topics are too serious for the students, however, he also added that he believes in his students' ability and that they can think about them even if they are difficult topics. Also, both teachers shared their concern regarding the amount and difficulty of the vocabulary included in the texts (which stems from the requirements set by the Course of Study).

During the interviews, when asked about the tasks and activities, both participants agreed that some activities were not stimulating for the students. Sakura mentioned the example when students need to have conversations with each other such as "Do you have any CDs?" "Yes, I have three CDs" (*Sunshine 1*, p.40), which might not be engaging for the students. Shouta also shared Sakura's opinion and mentioned that sometimes he needs to replace speaking and writing activities with other materials to captivate the students more.

Another problem with the tasks that both parties mentioned was that listening exercises are too easy, because most of them only require choosing one correct answer, or just catching one key word. Sakura also added that the listening exercises of the entrance exams are more difficult and longer than the ones in the book.

As for whether the tasks and activities make students think, negotiate and utilize their background knowledge, Sakura shared her concern that the tasks do not really encourage students to use such skills, and that probably topics like anime or manga would make first year students use their background knowledge more. Sakura also pointed out that as a teacher, it is hard to find some points in certain pages of the book that students can think about. Shouta stated that some tasks can make students think, for example the topic of cultural differences in the 2nd year in *Program 10* ("So Many Countries, So Many Customs"). Also, he added that students can learn how to negotiate through such tasks as a telephone conversation or shopping.

When asked about the pronunciation difficulties of their students, both teachers agreed that pronunciation is very hard for their learners. In Sakura's opinion, the textbook does not provide enough support to address the special difficulties that Japanese students of English are facing. For instance, she pointed out that the *Pronunciation Clinic* section is sometimes too long and difficult. She gave the example of "The spring months are March (↗), April (↗) and May (↘)."(*Sunshine 1*, p.111), and she commented that "they just talk. They don't care about the Japanese, but they just repeat and then finish" (Interview, January 26, 2015). In connection with the same *Pronunciation Clinic* section, Shouta concluded that accompanied by the phonetic corner at the bottom of most pages, it helps students practice their pronunciation. However, he did not always use the bottom-page notes in class. In general, he expressed that he thought the book provided enough support for pronunciation, and he also mentioned that the book shows phonetic symbols, which can be helpful for the students. In contrast, the first grade book does not include phonetic symbols next to the new words in the main text, which Sakura stated would better serve the students. As a positive aspect of pronunciation instruction for the first grade, she mentioned that the children liked the rhythm sections, since they can use their bodies during these activities.

4.2.4 Motivation for the teacher and manuals

Sakura said that this book can be challenging to teach, and that although she would like to teach and learn English in a more enjoyable way, having the students score well on the entrance exams is a requirement she also has to fulfill. Shouta commented that he liked teaching *Sunshine*, however, sometimes he thinks that "there are too many words for one page" (Interview, January 26, 2015), so they are hard for the students.

As for the *Teacher's Manual*, both teachers express their desire that it gives them ideas for customizing the lessons to different groups. Sakura commented that she does not use some of the supporting materials, but sometimes reads the *Manual*. The reason why she does not often use them is because if she used them, it would not be her class. She commented that she used to follow the *Teacher's Manual*, but the lesson plan suggestions included were not well-received by her students, so she modified them. Sakura also added that there are too many different types of materials, and she does not have the time to use them. Concerning the *Manual*, Shouta expressed a similar opinion to Sakura by saying that he rarely uses it because the plans were not appropriate for his students. However, he said that having the Japanese meaning, vocabulary and background information included in the supporting materials helps him, so he occasionally uses the *Manual* to get some suggestions. He also uses the test booklet on a regular basis.

4.3 Strategies the Participants Used to Supplement *Sunshine*

In this section, the authors will look at the practices of the teachers to supplement the textbook, based on the issues they were implying in the previous sections (4.2.1-4.2.4).

4.3.1 More motivating books for the students and more interesting activities

To make the book more motivating, Sakura said that students should be given tasks which include making something, because active learning works better for students of this age. Therefore, she preferred involving creative exercises in her lessons, such as students designing their own quizzes based on a listening activity. Shouta said that achieving a balance is very important, and tasks should not be either too difficult or too easy.

Furthermore, both teachers mentioned that some activities in the textbooks did not attract their students' interest. As a solution, the teachers skipped and/or replaced these activities using ideas from the Internet or their own original

ones to make the tasks more enjoyable. In their lessons the teachers regularly use examples with contemporary famous people and celebrities as well as interesting facts concerning some of the examples included in the book. One observed instance of such a practice was when Sakura used a projector in the classroom, partly covering the faces of famous people. The students had to guess who the person was, and while doing so, they were practicing how to get information about people, mostly concentrating on the questions 'Who is she?', 'Who is he?', or 'Who are they?' Another example of making tasks more interesting and competitive was when Shouta used pictures of famous places and people for comparison in the classroom. For instance, besides having to write a comparative sentence about the Eiffel Tower and Tokyo Tower, the group also discussed how high they were respectively.

Another way of making activities more interesting was the use of various grouping patterns. During the lessons observed, students had the opportunity to work in pairs with the person sitting next to them, behind them, or even rotate and work with three or four different students in the class. At other times, students were asked to work in small groups, and there were times when two groups shared their ideas with each other. On one occasion there was a group role-play in Sakura's class, in which groups of three were formed. After some practice with their group members, the representatives of the different roles were asked to pair up with someone who had the same role and give each other ideas on the role.

4.3.2 Need for more review and more vocabulary practice

During the interviews both teachers expressed their opinions that more review activities should be included in the textbook. One of the review techniques that both teachers used at the beginning of every lesson was having the students practice the vocabulary list of the given chapter in pairs. Vocabulary revision during the lessons was further supported by the use of word cards and pictures, for instance when Shouta's class was revising the names of previously learned subjects. Using pictures for brainstorming was also a technique used by both teachers, for instance by using the picture cards of *Sunshine* to talk about *ozoni* in the 1st year, or wrestling in the 2nd year. In Shouta's class, students would read aloud previously covered readings while homework was being checked. This was a regular technique to review vocabulary.

As for grammar review, both teachers included questions eliciting the students' already existing knowledge during the lessons. Grammar review was mostly done in the form of concept checking questions having students use the target structure, or by asking them to correct each other's mistakes, thus checking their understanding of the grammatical item(s) in question. One instance of this type of review was seen when Shouta asked about the weather to his students, and they answered 'It is snowy.' At this point, he pointed out that it was still snowing outside, and elicited the answer that in such a case they should say 'It is snowing.'

As for vocabulary items, both Sakura and Shouta agreed that some of the words and phrases included in the books were difficult for their students, and that there are too many of them to remember. To handle this problem, vocabulary quizzes, reading aloud sessions, using a highlighter to signal problematic words, clarifying words with multiple meanings, or providing Japanese equivalents were employed.

4.3.3 More support on pronunciation, intonation, punctuation and making students think

To improve the pronunciation and intonation of their students, both Sakura and Shouta made the students recite words, phrases and sentences multiple times, giving extra attention to katakana words, spelling and punctuation. Both of them applied various reading patterns in their classes, for instance, Sakura regularly used the chunk reading

technique, while Shouta often utilized the back formation technique to repeat structures and sentences. He also used altering between English and Japanese equivalents, or switching between the yellow and green roles of the dialogues. Both teachers applied slash reading on a regular basis as well. In Sakura's class further techniques observed were beating the rhythm of the words with her hands, gradually uncovering the letters of a word while students were spelling it, or making students repeat each other's correct answers.

To make students utilize their background knowledge to a greater extent, both teachers used brainstorming techniques in their classes, for example by showing the students pictures or by eliciting students' knowledge about Japanese culture and foreign culture. One example for that was when Sakura's class was studying a telephone conversation (*Sunshine 1*, p.95), and she asked the class how Japanese people and English people answer the phone. Shouta often included example sentences with interesting information from all over the world, and checked the knowledge of students in the form of follow-up questions. For instance, when the class was studying comparatives, students had to answer the question "Which is longer, the Amazon River or the Nile River?", and after giving the grammatically correct answer, he asked the students if they knew the exact length of these rivers.

Another technique that both teachers used to make their students think was asking the learners to think about how they would read a certain text, whether there are any points that should be treated carefully. For example in Sakura's class, in case of the same telephone conversation mentioned above, some students said that "Mom! It's for you!" (*Sunshine 1*, p.95) should be said louder, because it is calling for the mother who is probably somewhere further away. In Shouta's classes, after every reading the students were asked to think of how they would read the text, write it down, then share their ideas with two other students, and finally read the text once again in pairs according to their new ideas.

4.3.4 Ideas for enhancing content and additional support material

Concerning how they make the lesson ideas more interesting, Sakura said that she usually started the lessons with oral communication and included her students to make them listen more carefully. Also, when she used a projector, songs or pictures in the class, the students tended to be more engaged. Shouta also said that he sometimes used a projector, a computer, a screen or a song to make his lesson more captivating for the students, mentioning the use of Power Point occasionally for pronunciation exercises. He also uses background music in his classes, for instance while students are memorizing dialogues in pairs. To make up for some of the support materials that they lack or that are not suitable for their groups, both teachers create their own vocabulary lists and worksheets regularly.

5. Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper we discussed how education policy promoting CLT has had mixed results. We also discussed how the textbook can be a means to promote new policy. We have taken a look at how much the *Sunshine* textbook series is in unison with the current Course of Study, and to see how teachers implement the textbooks into their classroom practices. We found that in principle, the textbook was compatible with a CLT approach but class observations and interviews revealed the necessity to adapt and supplement the textbook to enhance compatibility with the local context. When looking at textbooks and classroom practices, it is important to remember that each group of students have different needs, different interests, different levels of command of the target language, and that there is no perfect textbook that could address all the possible needs of the student population. It is a must for

teachers to develop their own set of techniques and methodology to address student needs and improve the efficiency of the lessons. Although no sweeping generalizations can be made from a case study of two teachers, this study shows that teachers are trying to implement a CLT-like approach into their teaching.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1 － Interview questions

Warm-up questions

1. How long have you been an English teacher?
2. What grades are you teaching in?
3. What are the most important goals and aspects of teaching for you? What does it mean for you to be a teacher?
4. Can you tell me about your class? (for example attitude towards English, weak points, strong points, special needs, relations with each other, relations with the teacher etc.)

General questions about Sunshine

5. Do you think that Sunshine is **easily adaptable** for different groups with different needs?
6. How long have you been teaching Sunshine? How do you find it **compared to** New Horizon?
7. Would you say that Sunshine is a textbook that **motivates** English learning? If yes, in what ways? If not, do you have any ideas how to make it more motivating?

Structure and content

8. What is your opinion about the **structure** of the book? If you could, would you like to make any adjustments in content and/or sequencing to better fit the course and the needs of your students?
9. What is your opinion about the **topics** covered in *Sunshine*? (For example: Are they motivating? Appropriate for this age group? Any topics that you would rather replace or would consider it a good idea to be included? Difficulty of vocabulary? etc.)
10. In your opinion, do the **tasks** of *Sunshine* make the students think, negotiate, or utilize their background knowledge? If so, in what ways?
11. It is often mentioned that **pronunciation** is especially hard for Japanese students. Do you agree?
12. Do you find that the book provides **sufficient guidance** on English pronunciation? In what ways is pronunciation practice included in your lessons?
13. What are aspects of learning English that your students are having **difficulties** with? Does the textbook support you with enough tasks to overcome these difficulties? (for example listening, certain kinds of grammar etc.)

Teaching Sunshine

14. As a teacher, **how motivated** and **challenged** do you feel while teaching *Sunshine*?
15. To what extent does the Teacher's Book let you utilize your **own teaching style** and ideas? Would you say that the textbook is in unison with your own teaching principles? Does it support your work?
16. How do you implement the **suggestions of the Teacher's Manual** into your lessons?
17. Do you ever add tasks or **make materials** besides the suggestions of the Teacher's Manual? (for example word lists, activities etc.)
18. Does the Teacher's Manual and other materials of *Sunshine* provide you with enough alternatives to **customize your lessons** to your different groups?

19. What is your opinion about including **modern technology** in the classroom?

20. What is it that you would like to **change** about the book or its support materials to make it more **teacher-friendly**?

21. What is it that you would like to **change** about the book or its support materials to make it more **student-friendly**?

22. Any additional **comments** about the textbook are welcome.