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# Can Native Literacy Practices Impact EFL Learning? The Example of Japan

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*Katakana eigo* is a Japanese term referring to English rendered into a written form that uses one of the two syllabaries of written Japanese. On the one hand, it aids a legitimate process: the borrowing and subsequent nativization of terms from English into Japanese. On the other hand, its use in EFL teaching and learning (because of its cross-lingual, L2 to L1 orientation) may well hinder literacy and language development in the L2. In this paper, the author looks at why *katakana eigo* is used in the EFL learning in Japan. The reasons center most on teachers' and learners' responses to the complex nature of the writing system of English. The author then goes on to cover *katakana eigo* in relation to the pedagogical stances possible. Finally, the author lists and describes methods and activities that could help to make *katakana eigo* and other such graphic translation 'crutches' unnecessary in the EFL classroom in Japan (and in other countries where non-alphabetic writing systems are used).

**K***atakana eigo* refers to the use of one of the syllabaries of written Japanese (*katakana*) for transcribing English into a more consistent, easily decoded form. For the sake of this article's discussion, EFL teachers' attitudes in Japan toward *katakana eigo* can be summarized as basically these three:

- (1) 'Katakana eigo' is bad, and we should ban it;
- (2) 'katakana eigo' is not particularly useful, but it is part of the cross-lingual (L2 to L1) reality of teaching beginners in Japan, still let us not encourage it;
- (3) 'katakana eigo' is a useful crutch, helping students as a cognitive bridge to literacy in EFL, so let us tolerate it and perhaps even adapt it appropriately to FLL here.

It is natural for beginners to make substitutions and simplifications with the FL's sound system and sound tactics. Non-native/JSL/JFL speakers of Japanese are no different on this point, something that native speaker EFL teachers here sometimes forget. It is also a matter of course that students might take a very familiar, consistent, phonologically transparent, syllabic script like *katakana* and use it to transcribe a language written in one that is not so easy to decode for pronunciation (that is, the complex, alphabetic writing conventions of English). It does seem possible, though, that a persistent reliance on *katakana eigo* throughout beginning levels of instruction wrongly reinforces the idea that English does not have its own sound system and phonotactics. The impression that beginners might get is that the sounds and the rules for combining them into clusters, vowel combinations and syllables in English are easily fit into the phonology of Japanese (they are not, not if intelligibility is to survive).

In standard phonemic accounts, spoken Japanese has far fewer sounds than English, and simpler phono-tactics for putting these sounds together into syllables. A typical Japanese syllable is V or CV type; few consonant sounds can close a syllable, and there are not many

consonant clusters. A writing system such as *katakana* that is based on a syllabic analysis of spoken Japanese, therefore, proves an ill fit for spoken English. What appears to be most at issue is the mental, phonological representations of the FL in the minds of the learners which enable them to process it with comprehension and to learn it. Here are two examples of how *katakana eigo* renders English into a Japanese form. Take the word *banana*. In Japanese, this word would be written as three syllabic characters,  $\cdot o \cdot i \cdot i$ , which we can romanize as *ba-na-na*. In this case the written Japanese corresponds perfectly with the English (though note, the Japanese form of this word would be given fairly even stress across all three syllables, while the English word typically receives the strongest stress on the second syllable, with fairly neutral vowels in the first and final syllables). But look what happens with a second example, 'McDonald's'. In Japanese, this would be written as  $\cdot \} \cdot N \cdot h \cdot i \cdot \cdot \cdot h$ , which as romanized is *ma-ku-do-na-ru-do*. Now, both the words 'banana' and 'McDonald's' are well-established loan words in modern spoken Japanese, and, as such, the nativized pronunciations of these for spoken Japanese are perfectly legitimate. But it is easy to see from these two examples what might happen to English words in an EFL setting if students used *katakana* to make target vocabulary more easily decodable. If a word has a similar syllable structure to Japanese (such as V or CV), then the effects are not so profound. In the case of a word like 'McDonald's', the English word with three syllables becomes a six-syllable word with all open syllables and a lot of intruded vowel sounds.

If *katakana eigo* is banned in class, this decision is a school's, department's or teacher's choice. However, we must also remain aware of two separate parts of linguistic reality in Japan, where English is both an important source of loan words and a much-studied FL: (1) Students are still going to make sound substitutions from Japanese and their inter-language when speaking and reading English out loud, and (2) English loan words become visible and usable in Japanese because they have been transcribed into *katakana eigo* form.

## Possible Teaching Strategies

The following are some possibilities to help teachers work out a stance toward *katakana eigo*, keeping actual instruction in mind.

### (1) *Modification and expansion of the syllabary*

We could modify *katakana eigo* so that it reflects better the sounds (instead of 20 some for Japanese, 44-48 for English) and the sound tactics (e.g. sound sequences and syllable structure) of spoken English. There are several modified and enlarged syllabaries in limited use in TEFL in Japan. These supplemented syllabaries seem inspired by the 'innovative' form of Japanese, which is Japanese that has added new sounds, sound sequences and supplementary *katakana* symbols, mostly as a result of English's tremendous influence on the language.

The good side of these modified and expanded syllabaries is that they can be used to transcribe fairly accurately the reductions of rapidly spoken English (which is not so obviously stress-based as once thought, and which simplifies in terms of the number of sounds actually pronounced). The down side includes: in order to get a better representation of spoken English, a lot of combined symbols are needed--and students still have to learn the English sounds, since a symbol is not a sound, but only possibly stands for a sound if the speaker mentally knows that sound. A problem with representing English at a syllabic level using syllabic symbols is that, in theory, you would need a set of symbols that numbered well into the hundreds, possibly thousands. The phonotactics of English result in a lot of different syllable types; moreover, English is one spoken language in which syllable and even word boundaries demonstrably overlap (with many phonetic 'features' spread across two or more syllables, even entire words

and word groups). Finally, it has to be pointed out that the systems I have seen, however carefully constructed they might be, seem to waste a lot of time presenting something that is of no use for reading real written English.

### (2) *Adopt the ITA*

We might adopt a reformed system of spelling, such as the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA). The ITA is a simplified spelling system based largely on a phonemic account of English. It is overall a more consistent, simpler use of the Roman alphabet conventions of written English. It uses a lot of the same characters as those of real written English, but it more consistently abides by the alphabetic principle: one letter always stands for only one sound (with the exception of the sound /k/ being spelled as <c> in some words — like 'cat' — and <k> in others — like 'kind').

The good side of this is that for those who know the full set of 40 plus categorical sounds (such as fluent native speaker children coming to literacy for the first time), it does make written English more phonically transparent. The down side is that it only makes alphabetic sense if you know the sounds. It would still confuse speakers of other languages who did not have all those sounds. Moreover, in order to capture all the English sounds in a one-symbol / one-sound relationship, the ITA has to use more symbols than are available in the 26 letters of our alphabet. In order to do this, the inventor of the ITA created or imported exotics. Such exotic symbols are not found in real written English and they can be confused with dictionary transcriptions.

Also, the ITA has never been used much in printed texts of English, so there are few materials available. If a school or teacher wanted to try out the ITA, they would probably have to develop all their own ITA materials. (I would suggest creating storybooks with tapes for young learners). And, sooner or later, students would have to be weaned off the ITA and launched into real written English, a detour that may be very difficult to take if one is teaching within a national education system with curriculum set by a Ministry of Education (such as Japan).

### (3) *Use the IPA*

We could use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and teach pronunciation as phonemics and phonetics (The pros and cons of such an approach are covered thoughtfully in Maguire, 1995). The IPA was designed to give linguists, lexicographers and language teachers a tool to represent consistently and as simply as possible a language's set of categorical sounds (called 'phonemes') with a corresponding set of symbols. However, the symbols of the IPA can be used to represent a language in two overlapping ways: quite *widely* (one symbol for one phoneme) or quite *narrowly* (to show important phonetic variation within a sound category). Both are necessary for FLL, since the rules that govern sound variations of phonemes may not make any intuitive sense to a foreign language learner, however logical and natural such variation may seem to a native speaker. A narrow representation (which gives a very large set of sounds for spoken English that goes far beyond the 44 phonemes attributed to the language) is achieved by using additional symbols and marks to try and capture the important phonetic complexity of a spoken language — things like vowel length or sound alternations. It is this latter phonetic flexibility that enables linguists to transcribe with a considerable degree of detail ANY language as it is spoken using the IPA symbols. Most writing systems, however, have not evolved or been developed with this sort of detail in mind (with Korean *hangul*, a featural and syllabic writing system, being an interesting exception). IPA symbols indicating the pronunciation of words are found in most Japanese dictionaries of English and in most EFL dictionaries produced by major ELT publishers.

As with the ITA, many of the symbols of the IPA are rather different than the Roman alphabet, while others are confusingly the same (same symbol, different sound often). Also, many native speakers of English do not know the conventions for transcribing pronunciation into the IPA (especially in the U.S., where quite different symbols are typically used in dictionaries meant for native speakers). And, in the case of EFL learners, it makes no sense whatsoever to learn many IPA symbols for a particular language without knowing the sounds they are supposed to stand for. Finally, IPA transcriptions do not help with real written English, unless you are patient and take the trouble to deal with two written scripts.

Unlike the IPA, though, at least the ITA (see #2 above) is based on some of the conventions of real written English, so with a bit of instruction and practice, native speakers of English can learn very quickly to read it (though obviously, lack of word knowledge and lack of sounds hold back EFL students).

#### *(4) Approach English spelling head -on*

We could be honest and direct with students and say, “Look, you have to learn to read real English from the start.” Then, as teachers it is our responsibility to give the students the instructional framework and task structure by which to acquire a fluent ability to process the complexity of real written English. With lots of oral input and activities that involve reading-while-listening or listening-while-reading, this seems possible. But again, for teachers who have to function in a national system with strict schedules for covering the curriculum, are administrators, senior colleagues, parents and students willing to wait out the initial difficult period in which learning with written texts seems to be too slow? One reason we might be tempted to revert to ‘crutches’ like *katakana eigo* is, like any other type of ‘translation’, its expediency. However, it cannot be denied that with adolescent and adult learners, fluent literacy skills are also of use in FL learning (for a rationale see Field, 1997). Next, let us look at how a straight on approach to the complexity of English spelling might be accomplished in a well-balanced EFL literacy and learning program.

### Whole Language Using Picture Books

‘Books-with-tapes/tapes-with-books’ methods are increasingly in use, such as in Australia (*Leggi-Ascolta*, Di Biase, n.d.) and in Brunei (RELA, Ng, Seok Moi., 1994). These have been deemed to be highly effective because they are designed to keep the language demands down at the start of L2 learning while using two complementary input channels (visual-reading, aural-listening) simultaneously. Moreover, they make it possible to balance listening, speaking, reading and writing during the language learning process. In the case of books and reading lessons for beginners, comprehension of the foreign language is reinforced by the non-linguistic comprehension of the pictures. Moreover, ‘books-with-tapes’ methods emphasize storytelling and comprehension of narratives over formal language study. Thus they seem quite appropriate for young language learners. One issue, however, which requires further investigation is this possibility: that input through two or more parallel channels (visual/reading; visual-non-linguistic, and aural/listening) can lead to too much information and actually detract from comprehension. Learners who have developed mature reading processes and abilities for L2 text may not need the non-linguistic visual or aural reinforcement, and such reinforcement may actually detract from their understanding and speed in the processing of text.

### Phonics and Spelling Pattern Approaches

We could try introducing systematic phonics along with beginning reading (though in EFL in

Japan, beginning EFL reading is often conflated with beginning language learning). Phonics would emphasize the regularity that is there. Systematic phonics stretched out over several years of the curriculum would have to go beyond the simple decodable words (like 'cat' and 'dog') and deal with the numerous major and minor patterns (see Jannuzi, 1992a for an introduction to what teachers need to know about this complex regularity). Some EFL courses developed for children include a phonics component, but this element is largely overlooked in materials for beginning level adolescent and adult EFL learners (see McClelland, Hale & Beaudikofer, 1976 for a complete EFL phonics course appropriate for adolescents and adults). Game-like activities that focus on this aspect of written English and its interplay with memory skills have intuitive appeal for both teachers and students (see Jannuzi, 1992b). Many common patterns do not work along strict one-symbol-to-one-sound relationships. Rather, they provide complex non-semantic clues to pronunciation by visual analogy: you know how 'sight' is said, so you generalize it to 'might', 'night', 'right', etc. Or, you know the word 'eight' is said just like 'ate', so if you encounter the word 'freight' for the first time, you guess that it rhymes with 'eight' (even if you did not know the oral form of this word, though, admittedly, this type of knowledge would aid reading it.) (See Figure 1 below for a more thorough list of the vowel patterns.)

Phonics as a set of classroom procedures exemplifies a very traditional problem in presentation that is analog-ous to grammar: giving phonics "rules" to students in explicit direct instruction does not guarantee learning and integration into English literacy. Cunningham and Cunningham (1992) make a convincing case for running classroom activities that help students to make and invent spellings to fit known and target vocabulary. Although their recommended procedures are geared for young literacy learners in native and ESL settings, they can be adapted to EFL children, adolescent and adult beginners. Non-traditional approaches that go beyond phonics or teaching and learning the symbol-sound relationships represented in the written code of English include Richards (1993) and Higgins, Higgins and Shima (1995), all of whom advise the use of mnemonics to aid the learner in what would appear to be a very memory-intensive task.

Also, teachers must not forget that the spelling patterns of written English work across related meanings instead of being limited to pronunciations (somewhat like English's lexical cousin, written French). Compare the spoken and written forms of the related words 'phone', 'phonological', 'phonology' and 'phonics'. The spellings of these words provide both clues to pronunciation and meaning across related morphological forms, but the overall patterns retain stability of morphology at the expense of a phonetic account of the shifting vowel patterns. In this way, modern written English, like its lexical cousin, French, upholds etymological principles that preserve the word history of the language at the expense of phonological simplicity and transparency.

## Specific Techniques for Material Writing and Classroom Tasks

### *Phonics and Whole Word Skills*

There are a lot of materials for teaching EFL to children available from mainstream ELT publishers that include basic alphabet and phonics tasks. However, what about for older students like adolescents and adults? This is a concern since in many countries students do not really start learning EFL until these ages, and many older learners go back to the classroom to re-learn EFL and find themselves at a beginning level. The best example of a phonics course for older students that I have encountered in a commercially available form is McClelland, Hale, and Beaudikofer (1976, *English Sounds and Spelling*).

Palmer, Rodgers and Winn-Bell Olsen (*Back and Forth: Pair Activities for Language Development*, 1985) have devised a reproducible set of whole class and pair work activities that

Figure 1. Major and Minor Vowel Spelling Patterns of Written English\*

“Short”-“Long” Vowels: Basic Pattern

Short a /æ/: can, man, cap, tap, hat, rat

Short e /e/: pet, met, wet, pen, men, ten

Short i /i/: sit, kit, fit, tip, hip, sip

Short o /ɑ/: not, hot, cot, mop, pop, hop

Short u /ʌ/\*: cut, nut, hut, fun, sun, run

Long a /eɪ/: date, rate, late, tape, cape, shape

Long e /i:/: meter, mete, complete, Peter\*\*

Long i /aɪ/: time, dime, lime, site, kite, bite

Long o /ou/: note, vote, tote, rope, cope

Long u-yu /u:ju:/: tube, lube, rube, cute, mute, tune

“Long” Vowels: Important Alternative Patterns

Long a /eɪ/: say, day, way, pay, may  
vein, rein, reign, eight, freight  
rain, pain, main, paid, maid

Long e /i/: see, fee, feel, sleep, seen  
sea, tea, each, reach, teach  
he, she, we, be, me  
receive, receipt, deceive, deceit  
relief, grief, thief, belief, believe

Long i /aɪ/: sign, high, night, right, light  
kind, mind, blind, grind, find  
my, why, fly, sky, type

Long o /ou/: boat, float, coat, soap, loan  
know, grow, slow, flow, low  
toe, foe, doe, Joe, roe

Long u-yu /u:ju:/: too, soon, moon, boot, bloom  
new, knew, few, grew, flew  
blue, glue, true, due, Tuesday  
you, group, soup, troupe, coup

Other Vowels

/u/: put, push, pull, full, bush

/au/: out, mouth, south, loud, shout  
book, cook, look, took, good  
now, how, cow, brown, crowd

/oi/: boy, joy, toy, soybean, coy  
oil, boil, foil, coin, join

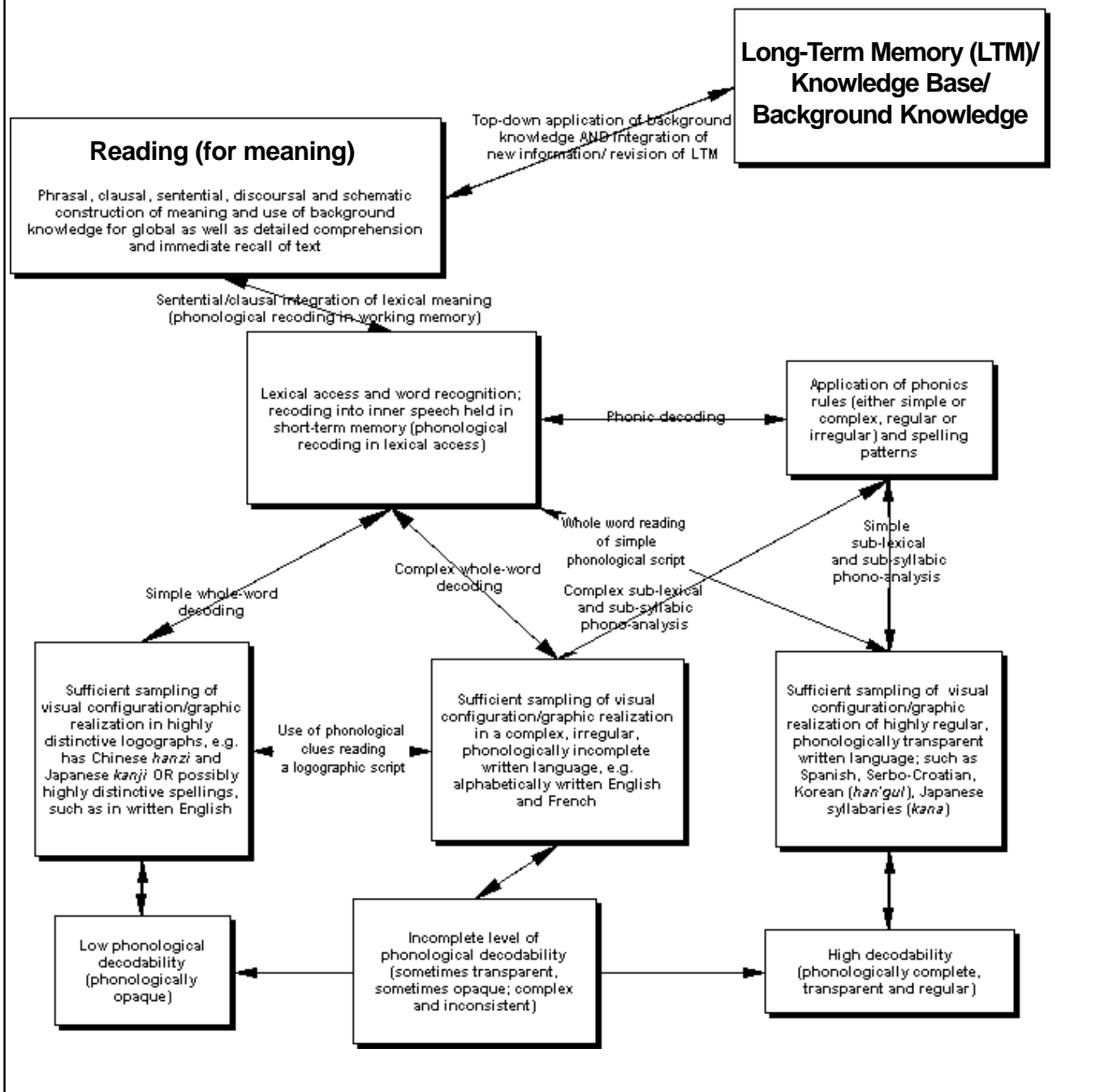
/a:/: talk, walk, chalk, calm, stalk  
taut, caught, taught, naught, nautical  
ought, sought, fought, bought, brought  
law, saw, draw, raw, awful

\*Since the real complexity in English spelling is largely with the vowels, this figure presents the major generative patterns. Accents vary, so accordingly to match individual/local differences vowel systems and example words may have to be reorganized under different spelling patterns.

\*\*This is usually the stressed form of the sound, not the much more common unstressed, neutralized form, often called ‘schwa’, which has so many spellings, it would be hard to say there are any patterns.

covers phonics and whole word skills (since spelling patterns are often captured at a level beyond simple symbol-sound relationships and many common words of English are ‘sight’ words, conforming to no pattern). Students are presented with a word list of 16 groups; each group of words contains three items that sound very much alike and highlight ‘marked’ problem sounds of English. For example, the first group of words might have the items ‘sent’, ‘sends’, and ‘sense’. The second group might have the words ‘saver’, ‘safer’, ‘saber’. And so on. The students look at the word list and read and repeat the words after the teacher. Then they form pairs; partner A gets a print with the words in one order and partner B gets a print with a

Figure 2. Lexical and Sublexical Processing According to Type of Orthography as a Part of Reading for Meaning



different order. They then take turns reading out loud and marking target words. For example, partner A might be told to listen and mark as B reads out the word 'sense' from the list. Then it is A's turn to pronounce one word — for example 'saver' — while B listens and marks. My experience has been that students rate this type of exercise highly, and it does place the practice of pronunciation (along with phonics and phonological aspects of word recognition skills) into the hands of the students, but in a highly structured way that teachers can support in the classroom. To that end, I always finish by doing the exercise as a whole class; I read one randomly chosen word from each group as students again listen and mark. In this way students will get to practice with the teacher's model as well as a peer.

Other phonics and word-analysis activities suitable for adolescent and adult EFL students include Kimmell (1989) and Lofft (1989). In Kimmell (1989, *Sound Out: Listening Skills Program*),

students are presented with a worksheet with words in groups of three. First, as an entire class say all of the words — this practices pronunciation and spelling. Then students listen as the teacher says a key word. They must choose from each group of words a word that rhymes or shares initial or medial or final sounds with the key word. For example, students see these three words: 'rod', 'fin', 'fan'. The teacher says the key word, 'ran'. The correct response would be to circle 'fan', because it rhymes with 'ran'. The 45 exercises in this reproducible "blackline masters" book gradually cover a spectrum of pronunciation, phonological awareness, and phonics skills. Lofft's reproducible book (1989, *Sound Puzzles*) is a variation on the same ideas behind Kimmell's. With the Lofft book, students practice a word list and then fill in blanks in a type of cloze exercise, but the words are written into blocks that contain a space for each letter of the word. In this way students have two possible clues as to whether they have chosen the correct answer — the meaning of the sentence and the number of spaces for the letters in the word. Each exercise isolates a particular phonics rule. The sentences in the Lofft book may be too difficult for beginning EFL students because many of the terms used are typical of vocabulary expected of native and bilingual speakers but often far afield from the vocabulary of EFL syllabuses at the beginning level. Teachers could, however, use it as a template in creating their own exercises appropriate for their students and the syllabus and word lists they must teach.

Paran (1996) puts forth a rather severe critique of the dominant top-down, schematic view of EFL reading and offers examples of exercises for developing automaticity in whole word recognition in support of fluent reading. In one type of exercise — a timed activity to be worked through as quickly as possible — the student sees a key word and then must read through a list of distracters that look very much like the key word until she or he spots the key word repeated (Paran, 1996, p. 31). So for example, 'immediately' would be followed by 'imediately', 'immediately', 'immediately', 'immediateley'. The student, if correct, would underline the third item and then move on to the next set of words. A variation of this is another timed exercise in which a key word is followed by similar-looking but real words of English, no misspellings (Paran, 1996, p. 31). The student proceeds as quickly as possible until she or he finds the word that is identical to the key word. For example, 'ensure' would be followed by 'insure', 'sure', 'insurance', and 'ensure'. The correct student would mark the last item as the matching one. This type of exercise can be made more demanding by presenting longer lists of similar words.

Kratoville (1989, *Word Tracking: High Frequency Words*; 1991, *Sentence Tracking: High Frequency Words*) has constructed two reproducible activity books similar to Paran's suggested tasks. In *Word Tracking*, the student is required to scan a paragraph of frequent words of English, picking out two or three target items. Then the student must write six sentences using words from the preceding paragraph. In the *Sentence Tracking* book, there is a type of timed exercise that goes like this: the student reads a sentence. She or he then proceeds to scan a paragraph of mostly nonsense words trying to find each word from the sentence just read. In a more difficult version, the student covers the sentence and then picks out the words that would make up the target sentence. The student may uncover the sentence to check her or his work. A final section contains paragraphs of largely nonsense words, and the student must work against the clock to pick out the real words (which are taken from a list of the most frequent words of English).

A final recommendation is the title, *What You Can Do With a Word: 300 Classroom Reading Activities* (Raymond, 1981). This book has been compiled for those teaching students with learning and reading disabilities, but can be adapted to beginning literacy in ELT contexts, especially for situations with young learners and learners needing remedial practice. The 300 activities and exercises explained in the book break down into categories for sight vocabulary/whole word skills, word analysis/phono-analytic skills, comprehension and vocabulary/word building, and book sharing/whole class reading projects. The sight vocabulary and word analysis activities overlap somewhat, as English sight words still give

phonic clues and everyday words that can be broken up along phonics principles can still be read as wholes, especially ones that are not too long. Teachers with this volume in their resource collection could easily cover all the skills (pronunciation, phonics/word analysis, whole word recognition, phonological awareness, etc.) discussed in this paper by using the explanations to prepare various activities which draw on the target vocabulary of the syllabus and textbook that they are actually using. These activities have all been designed to be brief and so are an ideal supplement for the main lesson, not a replacement for or distraction from it.

## Finding Some Theory in All This Practice

Excessive explicit presentation of any system of phonics with children who know little or no English would probably be a waste of time, no matter how good the underlying analysis might seem. Materials that make far better sense are ones that play off and supplement the main language syllabus and in which patterns are introduced and recycled, with more complexity gradually built in. At the same time, active learning needs to be engaged by asking learners to make explicit their own internal hypotheses about rule-like and generative tendencies and patterns that they notice in the writing system. The beginning learner's vocabulary consists, by necessity, extensively of words that must be learned as sight words through lots of repeated exposure and practice (e.g., 'I', 'eye', 'said', 'who', 'one', 'two', etc.). It is also possible to show students through exposure to graded and authentic texts the systematic, generative patterns as they become apparent in the target vocabulary. Such patterns might be simple "one letter=one sound" type correspondences, or they could take in patterns that are more complex (<ight>: 'sight', 'right', 'might', etc; <ei/eig/eigh>: 'rein', 'reign', 'sleigh', etc.).

In the cases of ELT, EFL and EFL literacy, I would argue we need to think more along the terms in which Goodman (1967, 1993) originally expressed his view of reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game": that is, in reading, writing and literacy ALL language processing and comprehension comes together with internalized linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic background knowledge as a TOP-DOWN, holistic orchestration of complex, overlapping skills. This includes those skills or processes that have been traditionally thought of as bottom-up and text-driven. There is no one aspect of a written text that is self-sufficiently bottom-up. That is why human languages are not digital codes, and digital computers can not meaningfully use or manipulate a human language, only transmit or store it if humans command them to. Active human minds and brains have to be engaged or no meaning is understood, interpreted, revised, created or exchanged.

Given the complex, irregular, incomplete, partly logographic, partly phonological nature of English writing conventions and English speakers' reading processes, even phonological and phonics skills must be more top-down, mind-driven processes than text-driven artifacts and inputs. Texts do not drive comprehension processes and never will--that is, texts can not read or understand themselves. It is precisely because written English is both alphabetic while so phonologically incomplete and unhelpful that, if it is visually and linguistically processed at sub-lexical levels, it truly is the "psycholinguistic guessing game" that Goodman has called it. All parts of EFL reading, then, from grapho-phonological elements to lexical, syntactical, discursal and schematic ones too, if they contribute to comprehension and making meaning, are best thought of as significantly top-down in nature. (See Figure 2 above for a highly schematic presentation of the major types of writing systems and the top-down processes they entail in order for decoding, lexical access and comprehension to take place.)

Teachers who have had to deal with EFL beginners struggling with the complex cipher that is English spelling might ask, What is the single best way to help students overcome the difficulties in decoding written English? Perhaps the single best answer is that teachers should read out loud to students as much as time allows. But students should not be rushed into reading out loud themselves in front of the class. Unfortunately, my own experiences teaching at junior high schools in Japan were just the opposite of my recommendation: students would

busily transcribe the text using *katakana eigo* because they knew their teachers would call on them to read parts of the text out loud in front of the entire class. No wonder, then, that popular, non-academic EFL materials marketed in Japan for beginning level adolescents and adults — such as study guides for the textbooks used in schools — often incorporate *katakana eigo* transcriptions of English vocabulary.

## Notes

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