

# The Use of Native Speakers in Japanese Secondary School English Teaching:

## With Special Reference to the Mombusho English Fellow Program

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### I. Introduction

There is an increasing tendency to introduce native speakers of English into the Japanese public junior and senior high schools. They are expected not only to help both the teachers and the students improve their English ability but also to promote cultural exchange.

It has not been uncommon for private junior and senior high schools to employ one or two native speakers as full-time teachers. But only recently have so many native speakers been introduced to public schools nationwide.

Two programs of the Japanese Ministry of Education (Mombusho) are playing an important role in the introduction of native speakers: one is the 'Mombusho English Fellow (MEF)' program, which Mombusho and the New York-based Council on International Education Exchange (CIEE) started in 1977; the other is the 'British English Teaching Scheme (BETS)'<sup>1</sup>, which Mombusho started in 1978 with the help of the British Council. An estimated 250 native speakers were sent to the Japanese public schools in 1985 by these two programs. In addition to these two programs, there are other programs independently organized by some municipalities.

Undoubtedly the tendency to have native speakers in public schools will increase from now on. For example, this April Fukui Prefecture invited 30 American teachers (as compared with 9 in 1985) in order that every public senior high school in the prefecture would have at least one. The Ministry of Home Affairs has, also, recently publicized a plan to import thousands of English-speaking youths to serve as high school English teachers and "private ambassadors" all over Japan. This plan will bring 600 young people to Japan in the summer of 1987 (300 from US, 100 each from UK, Australia and New Zealand). The Ministry says that the plan calls for a gradual year-by-year increase, with 3,000 of the young "ambassadors" seen living in Japan within few years.

There is no doubt that the introduction of native speakers through these programs can have a great influence on the English teaching in Japan. But, probably, we should not expect too much from them, because they are not miracle workers. We should rather try to find out the best way of using their skills and talents in Japanese English teaching, by considering some problems involved in this kind of program.

In this paper, I will consider the present situation of the MEF program, the only foreign exchange program in Miyazaki Prefecture, and I will try to suggest the best use of native speakers in English teaching in Japan.

**II. Mombusho English Fellow (MEF) Program<sup>2</sup>**

In 1969 Mombusho, together with the US State Department, established a program under the Japan-US Education Commission, the 'Fulbright Commission', for the purpose of improving English teaching in Japan. Fulbright English Assistants were sent to Prefectural Boards of Education<sup>3</sup>. This project ended in 1976, and in the next year Mombusho began the MEF program with the cooperation of the New York-based Council on International Education Exchange (CIEE).

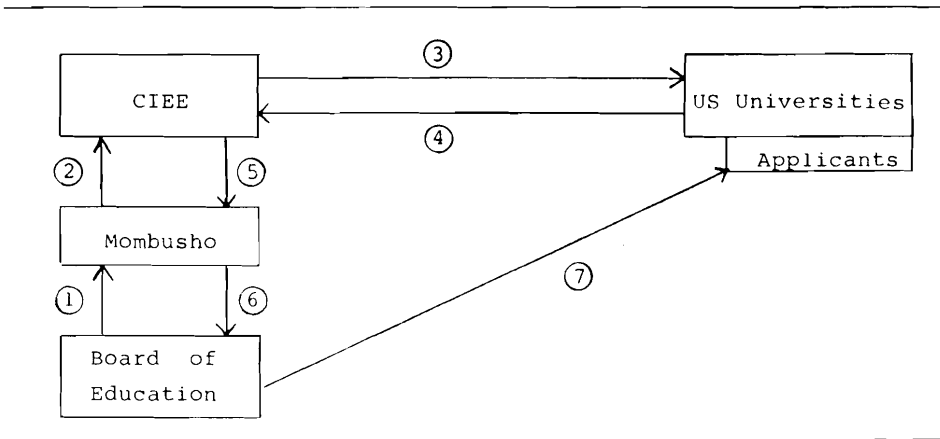
**A. Main Purpose**

Mombusho states the main purpose of this program as follows (*Mombusho*, 1985):

'... invite people from the United States who have a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) background, and put them under the Superintendents of each prefectural (or municipal) Board of Education for the purpose of improving junior and senior high school English teaching in Japan.'

**B. Employment Procedure**

Chart 1: The Procedure of MEF Employment\*



\* taken from Mombusho publication

MEFs are chosen by the procedure shown in Chart 1. The procedure has seven steps:

- Step 1: Based on the requests from each Board of Education, Mombusho makes out a plan for introducing MEFs in the next fiscal year.
- Step 2: Mombusho gives CIEE the task of recruiting applicants and making selections.
- Step 3: CIEE advertizes for applicants at US universities.
- Step 4: CIEE calls applicants together, gives them an explanation of the program, and gives each of them an selection interview.
- Step 5: CIEE recommends candidates to Mombusho.

Step 6: Mombusho makes a final choice among the candidates and a distribution plan for placement of successful candidates (MEFs) among the prefectures.

Step 7: Each Board of Education gets in touch with the designated MEFs.

Employment contracts are between the Boards of Education and individual MEFs. The contract covers the period from July to June of the following year. As the academic year of US universities ends in June, this is the best time for newly graduated students to apply this program. Although the period of the contract is 'one year,' it is possible for MEFs to renew their contracts 'when necessity arises.' As can be seen in Table 1, more than one-third (63) of the 166 MEFs in 1985 renewed their contracts. The number of applicants exhibits a startling increase since the beginning of this program, with the one exception of 1985.

Table 1: Number of MEFs (Applicants/Candidates)\*

Year	Applicants (Step 4)	Candidates (Step 5)	Successful Candidates (MEF)	Total
1977	42	10	7 ( 2)**	9
1978	43	17	11 ( 4)	15
1979	51	25	20 ( 3)	23
1980	88	37	28 ( 7)	35
1981	180	54	44 (14)	58
1982	225	76	57 (17)	74
1983	301	103	69 (39)	108
1984	540	111	96 (35)	131
1985	458	145	103 (63)	166

\* Mombusho Report (June, 1985)

\*\* ( ) in the row of 'Successful Candidates' shows the number of those in their second or third year. The two in 1977 were Fulbright Teaching Assistants.

### C. Numbers of MEFs

Table 1 shows the number of MEFs has increased year by year. Comparing prefectures in 1985 we see the following (*Mombusho Report*, 1985):

— Only three out of forty-seven prefectures did not employ MEFs.

(Osaka-fu, Miyagi-ken, and Tottori-ken)

— The top three employers of MEFs were:

Kumamoto.....13

Fukui ..... 9 (30 in 1986)

Shizuoka..... 8

— Thirteen prefectures showed an increase from the previous year.

(10 prefectures increased by 1 MEF/ 3 prefectures increased by more than 2 MEFs)

— Hiroshima Prefecture showed the most marked increase from the previous year. (from 1 MEF to 5 MEFs)

— Among cities, Funabashi-shi (Chiba Prefecture) with 6 MEFs was far and away in the lead followed by Kagoshima-shi with 2 MEFs.

**Table 2:** Number of MEFs in Kyushu (1985)\*

Prefecture		Prefecture	
Miyazaki	2 (2)**	Kumamoto	13 (12)
Fukuoka	2 (1)	Oita	2 (2)
Saga	3 (1)	Kagoshima***	3 (2)
Nagasaki	1 (1)	Okinawa	1 (1)

\* Mombusho Report (June, 1985)

\*\* ( ) is the number of MEFs in 1984

\*\*\* In Kagoshima Prefecture, besides the 3 prefectural MEFs, there were 2 in Kagoshima-shi, 1 in Sendai-shi, 1 in Kanoya-shi and 1 in Naze-shi, making a total of 8.

#### D. Requirements of MEFs

What kind of young people do Mombusho and CIEE want as MEFs? Mombusho clearly stated in its 'Operation Plan for the MEF Program in 1985' that a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) background is a requirement for MEFs. The CIEE pamphlet for recruiting MEFs, however, does not put an emphasis on a TEFL background. It says that applicants for MEFs must be native speakers of English with the following requirements:

- Bachelor's degree from a North American university. College seniors may apply.
- Excellent English skills, with model pronunciation, rhythm, intonation and voice projection; good English writing skills and grammar usage.
- Personal qualities which suit one to live and work within the established Japanese educational system, as well as in a situation where one may be the only foreigner and thereby viewed as a representative of the US. Selected applicants must be mature, patient, adaptable and outgoing.
- Foreign language study
- Some demonstrated interest in Japan (through study, travel, reading, involvement with Japanese groups in the US, etc.)

CIEE considers a TEFL background as one of the qualifications which are helpful but not necessarily required. In this sense, CIEE does not put too much emphasis on a TEFL background. The helpful qualifications are (*CIEE pamphlet*):

- Foreign travel
- Conversational ability in Japanese
- Living experience in Japan
- Academic or practical background in teaching English to non-native speakers.

Most of MEFs are not trained teachers.<sup>4</sup> It may seem rather presumptuous for untrained teachers (MEFs) to give advice to experienced Japanese English teachers. It is true that some MEFs admit that they do not know different teaching methods, but they can give some ideas or suggestions which Japanese English teachers could try in their classes.

There are other opinions about this problem. Mike Nicholls, English studies officer at the British Council in Tokyo, says this about BETS teachers:

'There is a feeling that professional teachers would get frustrated with their limited role,

that a relatively inexperienced teacher is more suitable. ...It's also much easier to have a teacher-assistant relationship if the assistant is younger and less experienced.'

(*Japan Times*, June 2, 1985)

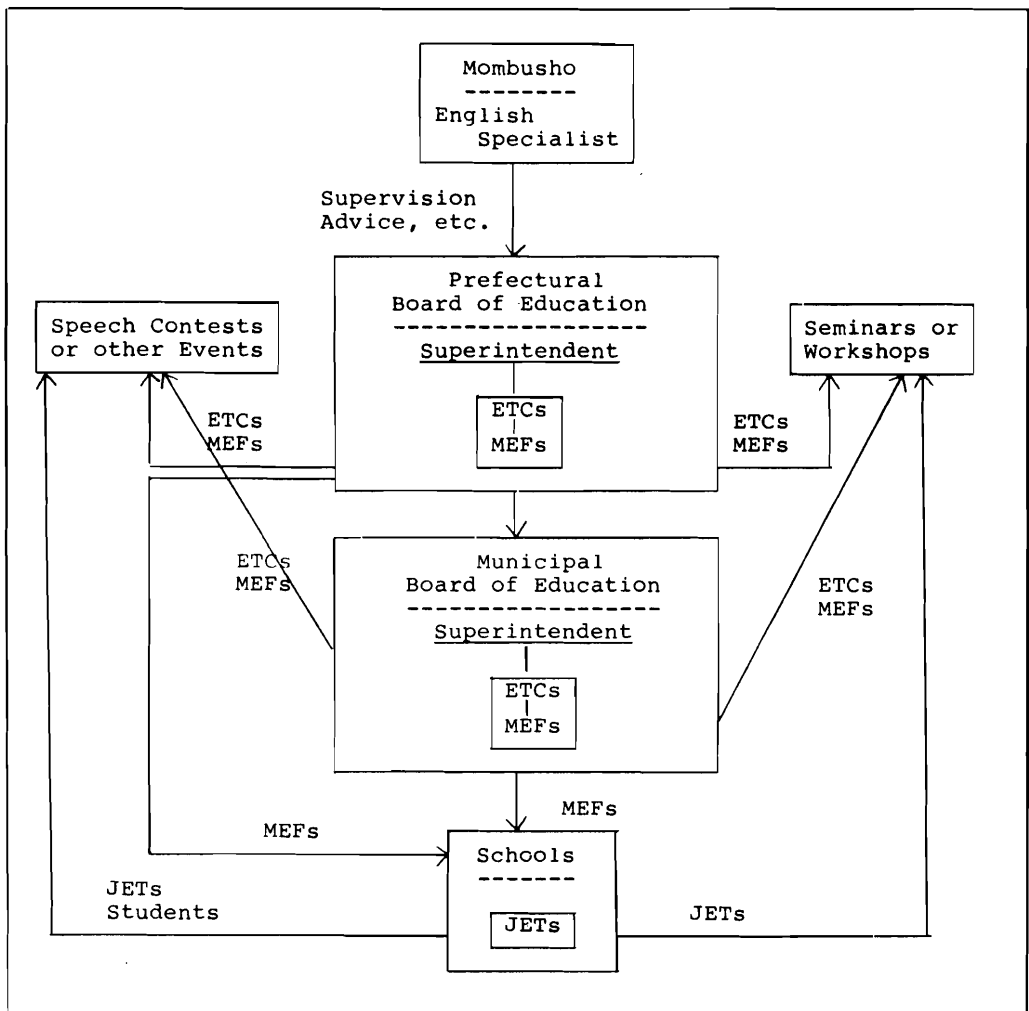
E. *Position and Roles of MEFs*

MEFs are put directly under the English Teaching Consultants (ETCs) of the prefectural or municipal Boards of Education. They assist ETCs in giving guidance and advice to Japanese English Teachers (hereafter called JETs).

MEFs are expected to help JETs in fulfilling two of the objectives described in the *Mombusho Course of Study* (1977 version):

- To develop students' basic ability to understand English and to express themselves in it

Chart 2: MEF's Position and Roles\*



\* a simplified version of the chart in *Wada* (1985)

— To help them acquire a basic understanding of the daily life and ways of thinking of foreign people.

To accomplish their roles, MEFs are engaged mainly in the following four activities (*Mombusho*, 1985):

1. In-service Training

Assist in in-service training for English teachers of public junior and senior high schools in accordance with programs approved by the Superintendent.

2. School Visits

Assist in classroom activities of public junior or senior high schools under the direction of the Superintendent.

3. Participation in School Club Activities, etc.

Participate in school club activities, etc. as a guest under the direction of the Superintendent.

4. Other Duties

Engage in other duties assigned to the Assistant by the Superintendent concerning English education.

In the next chapter, I will examine the present situation of the MEF activities and consider some of the current problems.

### III. MEF Activities and Some Problems<sup>5</sup>

We have seen that MEFs are engaged mainly in four activities: in-service training, school visits, advising student club activities, and helping with other prefectural events such as speech contests.

In this chapter, I will primarily concentrate on two of these activities; 'school visits' and 'in-service training', while examining some problems involved in these activities.

#### A. School Visits

1. Its Purpose

The main purpose of school visits is that MEFs help JETs as assistants in their teaching and also motivate both the teachers and students to improve their English ability. MEFs can, for example, perform the motivator's functions in the following way (*Wada*, 1985):

- to show that English is a living language
- to give the students chances to communicate with a native speaker in English
- to show that learning English is fun
- to facilitate the elimination of students' psychological inhibitions.

One of the former MEFs wrote as follows (*MEF Booklet*):

'My personal goals on a one-shot visit are two-fold. First and foremost, I want to encourage and motivate the students by showing them that English can be fun. Second, and equally important, I want to make an impact on the English teachers, either encouraging them to improve their own English, to make some changes in their classroom,

i.e. make English fun and interesting to the students, be creative, or simply just to *use* English in the classroom!

## 2. Preparation for Visits

### (a) MEF Letters of Introduction

Just after the arrival at their posts, MEFs write letters of introduction to every junior or senior high school in the area where they are going to work. The information in the letters may include their background, the purpose of their visits, types of class activities they think would be most useful. They may also ask JETs to help them with preparation before the visits and to participate in the class with them. Some simple ways JETs can participate in the class with MEFs are

- to help MEF by choosing students to answer the questions
- to translate an occasional word or phrase that is hard
- to test the students to see if they are understanding, etc.

### (b) The Invitation from JETs

After reading the MEF's letters, JETs who want to invite MEFs send a request to the Board of Education. The request includes (*MEF Booklet*):

- name of school and teachers' names
- date and time of the visit
- outline of the day's activities
- number of classes to be visited, levels, content of the class, etc.
- teaching plans for each class

JETs are asked to submit these papers at least three weeks prior to the school visits of the MEFs.

In personal interviews with JETs I learned that this paperwork is one of the main obstacles preventing JETs from inviting MEFs to their schools.

In addition, other serious factors which discourage JETs from inviting MEFs to their schools include (*JQ*, 1986):

- schedule adjustments
- principals' refusal to invite MEFs
- lack of cooperation from other JETs in school
- transportation problems

### (c) The Previous Arrangement between JETs and MEFs

Based on the requests from schools (or JETs), English Teaching Consultants (ETCs) of the Board of Education make a school-visit plan for the MEFs. When the date of a visit is decided, both MEFs and JETs begin preparing for the visit. MEFs might prepare some games or short skits based on the teaching plans of JETs with whom they are going to teach. JETs may make a detailed teaching plan for the class he/she is going to teach with the MEFs or ask their students to prepare some questions for MEFs. It would probably be best for JETs and MEFs to meet and discuss the class activities together, not separately. Getting in touch by telephone or letter may be second best.

To my question, 'Do you usually make previous arrangements?', nine out of 35 JETs answered 'Yes' (5 by telephone, 2 each by meetings or letters). The arrangement may consist of (*JQ*, 1986):

- How many classes the MEF is going to visit
- What the English ability of the students
- What kind of text book is being used
- What kind of grammatical items the students are studying
- What the role of MEF in the class activities will be
- How to get to the school, etc.

Unfortunately, most of the respondents answered they never make previous arrangements. Sometimes an MEF and a JET meet for the first time on the day of the visit and talk about the class activities only ten or five minutes before the class. It is difficult to expect good results from such lack of coordination. Many MEFs complain about this situation (*MQ*, 1986, *MEF Booklet*):

- Usually very little discussion takes place. Teachers communicate very little with me in terms of discussing what will happen in class.
- I usually have problems planning each hour. It is difficult to find time before class to plan all aspects of two or three hours of class. Since I do not have a chance for detailed discussion with the teacher until I actually visit the school.
- ... not enough pre-class planning or post-class discussion
- As I visit many many schools and do not visit any of them regularly, it is difficult to establish close working relationships with the teachers.
- I never seem to know what to expect until the moment I walk into the classroom!
- Mostly I don't have much time to plan lessons together with teachers.
- Sometimes, we don't have time to plan, or the teachers don't come to me.
- I would like to be more involved in the lesson-planning process so I can have more input into lesson and possibly demonstrate to teachers new teaching ideas.

Prior arrangements for visits are extremely important, and without these arrangements it may be difficult to get good results from the school visits. Although Japanese teachers and school authorities assume that the mere presence of a native speaker of English can be a good motivation for both the teachers and students, it seems rather expensive for Boards of Education to employ MEFs for a year only for that purpose.

In addition, with prior consultation in process of preparation of class activities, JETs would have the chance to discuss problems of English teaching with the MEFs.

Many JETs miss this chance partly because of their insufficient ability of English speaking (*MQ*, 1986, *MEF Booklet*):

- A handful of teachers have great difficulties with me and no interest in speaking with me.
- My biggest problem arises when teachers cannot communicate with me. My Japanese is good enough to plan a lesson, but sometimes teachers are too nervous to be effective.
- Many teachers speak poor English, or don't use what they *do* know in class.
- Teachers sometimes are afraid of me and as a result are scared, shy and worst, rude.



— Some teachers are too nervous and want to stand in the back of the class and do nothing.

I strongly feel the necessity of improvement of JETs' English ability, especially their speaking ability.

### 3. Types of Visits

There are two kinds of MEFs: 'Base school' MEFs and 'Non-base school' MEFs. The former have a particular school as their 'base'. They sometimes visit other schools, but most of the time they teach in their base school. The latter have no particular school and are always visiting different schools. Most of MEFs are in this latter group.

The school visits by 'non-base' MEFs can also be divided into 'one-shot' and 'regular' visits.

#### (a) One-shot Visits

This form of school visit appear to rise from the principle of equity. Every school in the prefecture should have the chance of receiving an MEF. So MEFs usually visit different schools every day (Miyazaki Prefecture has — as of 1986 — 146 junior high schools and 45 senior high schools.)

On one-shot visits, the role of the MEFs as a motivator is more important than as a teaching assistant. Sometimes JETs leave the whole class to MEFs. The typical teaching procedure by MEFs in one-shot visit includes (*MEF Booklet*):

- Self-introduction (sometimes with slides or other visual aids)
- Questions and Answers (between MEFs and students)
- Games (such as 'Tongue Twisters', 'Quizz,' etc.)
- Songs
- New Word Pronunciation
- Model Reading

The effects of the one-shot visits are at best periferal. In order to overcome this shortcoming, JETs should probably have a definite teaching point and make sufficient arrangements with MEFs about the class activities.

MEFs have the following problems in one-shot visits (*MQ*, 1986, *MEF Booklet*):

- The nature of the 'one shot' visit as well as the manner in which English is taught in this system (lecture method) thwarted almost all attempts of my putting my background (TESL) into practice. (cf. This MEF did 96 one-shots in a year — 10 JHSs & 86 SHSs)
- A schedule of continuous one-shots can be draining both physically and mentally.
- One-shots are very trying sometimes, but they can be fun.
- Often I receive a small gift in appreciation of my "hard work and helpfulness."
- Some of the best advice given to me by a veteran of one-shots was simply to find my niche. To survive the routine of self-introductions, slides, model reading, and Q & A, it is necessary to have something that you can feel special about.
- (in Q & A) it is difficult to get a good response unless the students have prepared questions or ideas beforehand.
- My biggest problem is just the repetition of questions, self-introductions, etc. ... I really need more satisfaction, input, and constructive evaluation of my job.

- With all of my weekly one-shot visits, I was already beginning to doubt that there was any use to me being here at all.
- ... Difficult to have a sense of accomplishment or build relationship because always on the move.
- Lack of continuity.
- No real sense of progress.

(b) Regular Visits

A great difference of regular visits (eg. once a week or twice a month) is that MEFs can get to know the teachers and students better in that school. MEFs seem to prefer this form of visit to the one-shot visit, because there is a little more feeling of 'continuity'. Even though there may be the same kinds of class activities as in one-shot visits, MEFs have more chances to do team-teaching with the JETs. In order to team-teach successfully, it is indispensable for JETs and MEFs to have a detailed teaching plan. For that purpose, they need to talk about the class activities beforehand, in conjunction with a syllabus for the term or even the entire year.

The roles of JETs and MEFs in class activities must be clearly understood. In most cases MEFs play a role helping JETs as assistants (MQ, 1986):

- ... I am the assistant, following what is usually an excellent plan. ... It is my goal to assist the teacher, not to become the important (person) in running the class...
- I try to be an assistant. I talk to the teacher constantly and the *two of us* speak to the students.
- (My role is) Secondary — I try to follow the Japanese teacher's suggestions and instructions.

The main functions of MEFs in these cases are, for example, 'modeling pronunciation and intonation,' 'modeling reading,' 'grammar explanation,' 'cultural information.'

But sometimes MEFs can share the class activities with JETs equally (MQ, 1986):

- ... Sometimes I am the 'helper,' sometimes the teacher has become the 'helper,' but the best classes are when we plan together and are both 'teachers.'
- Our role is equal. We try to divide the instruction so the students see us both as instructors.
- ... Other times, the teacher and I work together on every aspect of the class except grammar explanation.
- Only once have I ever had a chance to team-teach —both of us sharing the class equally— and I loved it. I think the best class is when all parties concerned share in activities; teacher, MEF and students.

This kind of sharing of roles (team-teaching) can be possible only when JETs and MEFs have had enough preparation in advance. Generally, however, they don't or can't have enough time for the preparation. Neither party has an idea how to share the role with the other. In that situation, JETs may sometimes use MEFs only as 'human tape recorders.' MEFs very much dislike to play this role (MQ, 1986):

- Generally, I drill students on text and vocabulary (*tape recorder*).
- (My role is) Different with every teacher: at worst, being used as a *human tape recorder*.
- Sometimes I'm the *human tape-recorder* & passive.

- Teacher tells me five minutes before class what he/she wants to do & I try to figure out during class; *human tape recorder*: I hate this type (same as students).
- ... Others seem to think that team-teaching simply involves the JETs doing his/her regular classroom instruction while the MEF is “used” as a pronunciation guide or textbook reader.
- A few teachers aren’t very imaginative, and I have trouble getting them to use me as other than *tape recorder*.
- Others (JETs) are too dominant and want to use me as a “human tape recorder,” that is, just to pronounce new words. This is *not* team-teaching.

MEFs seem to be more interested in team-teaching than JETs, who appear rather reluctant to do team-teaching because of the need for detailed preparation (*MQ*, 1986):

- Team-teaching is a good thing because it involves teacher, MEF, and students. But it requires preparation and creativity, two things most JETs are unwilling to work on.
- I highly approve of team teaching for any or all classes after the first.
- As teachers (JETs) in my area don’t seem to be very interested in team-teaching, usually I am forced to take all the initiative during my class.
- ... I enjoy team-teaching with teachers who *want to team-teach*.

Some JETs seem to be looking for the best way of team-teaching. But most of them find it difficult to do team-teaching with MEFs (*JQ*, 1986):

- I haven’t got a certain style of team-teaching yet, so I am using MEFs in a temporary way. By using interesting techniques such as dialogues between students and an MEF, or cultural information from an MEF, I want to have an enjoyable English class with an MEF.
- Sometimes I use an MEF as a substitution for a tape recorder. I am now searching for the best team-teaching.
- I am wondering how to use MEFs in the teaching plan of the whole year. I am always worrying about the progress of classwork when I invite MEFs, because there are only three English class hours a week.

Lack of preparation and confidence on the JETs’ side may be one of the major reasons for preventing them from team-teaching with MEFs. One JET frankly wrote (*JQ*, 1986):

- Because of an insufficient English ability, I find it difficult to work with an MEF in class efficiently.

The class activities for regular visits differ greatly among the JETs. The attitude and ability of JETs may decide the form of team-teaching with MEFs. It seems to me that both JETs and MEFs are now in the process of finding out the best way of team-teaching. There may be a suggested model for team-teaching, but I think every JET should establish his/her own style of team-teaching with the cooperation of the MEFs.<sup>6</sup>

### B. *In-service Training*

Naturally, JETs should constantly try to improve their English ability. In general, improvement

in English ability of each JET is indispensable for the improvement of English teaching in Japan.

There are many opportunities for JETs to participate in some kind of in-service training organized by Mombusho, prefectural/municipal Board of Education or other institutions. For example, in 1976 Mombusho started a one-month 'Tsukuba Seminar' (twice a year) for junior and senior high school English teachers. At most two participants can come from each prefecture to each seminar. The content of the seminar includes 'communication practice,' 'small-group discussion,' 'exercises on teaching methods,' etc. Those who have once participated in this seminar can then get a chance to apply for a two-month overseas seminar in the US or UK. But the participants in this seminar must be ETCs or experienced and able teachers in the prefecture.

There are other in-service training programs in some prefectures. The first organized intensive English seminar, called the 'Intensive Training Course (ITC),' to eliminate JETs who cannot speak English occurred in Kumamoto Prefecture in 1970 (Fukuda, 1979). The Council on English Education in Kumamoto (CEEK) organizes the program with the help of the prefectural Board of Education and another committee on English education. JETs under forty can attend courses with native speakers for several weeks at a time. These in-service trainings are a great help for the improvement of JETs' English ability.

In Miyazaki Prefecture, there are two kinds of in-service training: 'seminars' organized by Board of Education or Kenshu (seminar) Center and 'mini-workshops' usually held voluntarily after school visits.

### 1. Seminars

Miyazaki Prefecture had the following schedule of seminars for JETs in 1986.

**Table 3: Seminars in Miyazaki Prefecture\* (1986)**

Date	Organizer	Participants	Content
23-24 June	Kenshu-Center	JHS ETs (25)**	'Teaching grammar to aid expression ability'
22-24 July	"	new ETs (JHS & SHS) ( 7)	'Communication Workshop' (Speaking & Hearing)
29-30 Sept.	"	SHS ETs (13)	'Communicative Competence in Reading & Writing'
27-30 Oct. 5-6 Nov.	"	JHS & SHS ETs (17)	'Communication Practice'
1-3 Dec.	Board of Education	JHS & SHS ETs (12)	'Improvement of Teaching & Communication Practice'

\* information from Board of Education and Kenshu-Center

\*\* ( ) is the number of the participants

MEFs serve as lecturers or assistants in these seminars. They are expected to help with the improvement of the JETs' English ability, especially in listening comprehension and speaking. The activities in these seminars with MEFs may include,

- Pronunciation drill
- Exercises in speaking (in making a speech)
- Communication practice
- Games

- Classroom English
- Exercises in teaching methods (including team-teaching)
- Discussions, etc.

Two of the activities listed above deserve further attention: 'discussion' and 'classroom English.'

(a) Discussion

Discussions require JETs to have not only a fairly good command of English but also to have opinions on many topics. Discussions in small-groups are better than in a large groups because then every participant can have a chance to give his/her opinion in English. The active involvement in discussions in English surely helps to improve JET's English speaking ability.

The most popular topics in discussions are not necessarily about English teaching. Lighter topics such as 'American lifestyle,' 'Women working after marriage' or 'Sex education in high school' seem to be popular among JETs. To one of the items on the questionnaire ('What would you like to discuss with Japanese English teachers?'), many MEFs answered that they wanted to talk about English teaching. Some MEFs are eager to know what JETs are thinking about their own teaching, but JETs, in general, are not so interested in discussing this topic (MQ, 1986):

- I have difficulty with teachers though, because they only seem interested in improving their English, but they don't like to talk about improving their *teaching*.
- I want to talk about
  - Using English in class, building the students' confidence, thus increasing their desire to speak & study English.
  - How to share class time with them (JETs) better. That is team-teaching.
  - Teaching techniques/anxieties of students/goals of teaching.
  - Teacher's view of their own teaching. What works for them (JETs), what doesn't.
- I try to discuss with the teachers afterwards, but they aren't usually very interested. They usually only seem interested in apologizing for their students' "poor English."

I can see the MEFs' seriousness about their jobs and eager to be helpful to JETs.

On the other hand, there are some MEFs who don't like to talk about English teaching for various reasons (MQ, 1986):

- ... The only thing I don't talk much about is how to teach English. For some reason we avoid talking about that and just *do* it. ...
- (I want to discuss) Anything *other than* English education, ...After eight months, I have become tired of having the same generalizations, excuses, etc... "Japanese people can't speak English because..."

(b) Classroom English

If JETs did use English in their class, it would serve as a good example to show that English is a language for communication. The more JETs speak English to their students, the more accustomed they will become to English, the more receptive and willing to learn.

Unfortunately, most of the JETs are reluctant to use English in their classrooms, mainly because

they lack confidence in their speaking abilities and they underestimate their students' listening comprehension ability. Many MEFs consider this situation to be regrettable (MQ, 1986):

- ... I estimate ninety percent of the people I work with immediately state their English is "very poor." How sad it makes me to see this pervasive lack of confidence. It prevents teachers from using English in class, it prevents students from asking questions of the visiting MEF, and it severely impairs the development of spontaneous, relaxed conversation.
- (There are) Students who have been taught *to believe* that they can't perform well when *they can*.
- (There are) Teachers who don't think their students can perform well.
- Teachers with low expectations of themselves and students.
- Many JETs seem to underestimate the students' ability of understanding & speaking.
- ... I want to make an impact on the English teachers, ... or simply just to *use* English in the classroom!
- Some teachers don't want to speak English when I'm not there, so the students only hear English when I go to school. It's not very effective. It's wonderful to teach with someone who always uses English in the classroom.
- (I want to talk with JETs about) Using English in the class (more than half the time, even!), building the students' confidence, thus increasing their desire to speak & study English.
- Using more English in the classroom (classroom English), English teachers' speaking English to each other, etc.

JETs may not know what kind of classroom English they can use. Courses on classroom English in seminars or workshops can give JETs a list of sentences usable in the class activities and encourage them to use classroom English in their class.<sup>7</sup>

It must also be recognized that the exclusive use of English in the classroom can be counter-productive. The use of Japanese does have benefit, for example, in explaining meanings of words and grammatical features of language. This, however, does not mean that there is no necessity for classroom English.

## 2. Mini-workshops

MEFs sometimes participate in mini-workshops in schools after class. JETs in the nearby schools can join. This kind of workshop can be a golden opportunity for JETs to talk with MEFs about anything including the class activities on that day. The popular topics from seminars can also be discussed in mini-workshops.

To my question whether they have mini-workshops when they invite MEFs to their schools, 20 out of 25 JETs answered that they always/sometimes have them. The content of the mini-workshops includes (JQ, 1986):

- Discussion (sometimes over lunch)
  - students' attitudes
  - MEFs' advice on English teaching
  - reflexion on the day's class activities
  - lighter topics

- Tours of the school and surrounding area
- MEF's self-introduction and Q & A
- Introduction of American Culture (sometimes with slides, etc.)
- Listening Practice
- JETs' questions on grammar, etc.

A number of JETs answered they are too busy to have mini-workshops, thereby missing an excellent chance to talk with MEFs and improve their English ability. On the other hand, MEFs also miss the chance to gauge the influence of their visits on both the teachers and students (*MQ*, 1986):

- I try to discuss with the teachers afterwards, but they aren't usually very interested.
- Some teachers won't participate in weekly short seminars.
- (There is) Not enough pre-class planning or post-class discussion.

There may be some cases where JETs are forced to participate in this kind of workshop, or they come only from a sense of obligation. We, naturally, cannot expect much enthusiasm from such teachers.

It would be good if JETs regularly (at least once a month) had mini-workshops with MEFs. All participants would come voluntarily. It would be held in the evening for an hour or so. Anything could be introduced (*MEF Booklet*):

- |                  |                  |                               |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| — Speeches       | — Debates        | — Discussions                 |
| — Reading poetry | — Learning songs | — Studying newspaper articles |

The mere participation in these seminars or workshops cannot be sufficient for the improvement of English ability. JETs must make efforts always in the everyday life. Imaginative, creative and enthusiastic teachers never fail to seize every opportunity to improve their English. I agree with the comment of an MEF that the difference between those (teachers) who work hard and those who don't is very clear (*MQ*, 1986).

#### IV. Conclusion

Ideally English teachers in Japanese public schools should have a good command of English and teach their students by using English most of the class time, using Japanese only when necessary for the benefit of the students. They should be imaginative, creative, patient, flexible and energetic. In addition, they should have a sense of humour and showmanship. I know some teachers who always try to be 'good' teachers in the sense mentioned above. Many more do not apparently try to develop in that direction.

For the realization of the ideal situation, Japanese English teachers (more than 60,000 in Japan) need to make efforts to improve not only their English ability but also their teaching techniques. MEFs can be a great help for that purpose, and that is the significance of their being here. One of the MEFs gets to the point by saying (*MQ*, 1986):

'Remember, the ultimate goal of the MEF program is its elimination when the Japanese teachers are able to do a good job without us, as language teachers in other countries do, and even some in Japan!'

In that sense, the sooner we no longer depend on native speakers, the better. The question is when the ideal situation will develop, that is, when will JETs be able to teach well without the help of native speakers. JETs need more native speakers now in order to teach well without depending on them in the future.

Considering the purpose of improving the JETs' English ability and their teaching techniques, MEFs can be used most effectively in seminars or mini-workshops. Of course, school visits are not completely useless. These visits can be very effective in motivating both the teachers and the students to study English. But Japanese English teaching in public schools now has several difficult problems: English teaching oriented toward entrance exams, small number of class hours in public junior high schools, large class size, discrepancy in students' ability, students' negative attitudes to English study, etc. Sometimes the introduction of an MEF to the class may result in confusion. The teachers' lack of preparation and self-confidence can make the situation worse. Therefore, MEFs should be used more in seminars or workshops than in the classrooms. One of the MEFs is of the same opinion (MQ, 1986):

'Teachers are interested in what native speakers do, but there are better places for teachers to pick up those details — seminars where teachers can *be like* students, in a way. Learning by doing. Class is for kids. Seminars should be increased!'

The number of MEFs in Miyazaki Prefecture may increase next summer if the plan of the Ministry of Home Affairs is approved. If so, there may be more chances for JETs to 'use' MEFs for the improvement of their English ability and teaching techniques. There would also be more opportunities for schools to invite MEFs to motivate the teachers and the students.

I hope the day will soon come when there is no necessity to depend too much on native speakers as 'helpers' for Japanese English teachers in the classes.

## NOTES

1. The 'British English Teaching Scheme (BETS)' began in 1978 with twenty young people from the UK. The applicants must be British university graduates under 30. In 1985 there were no fewer than 850 applicants, of whom only 47 were employed. They worked with 24 members who were in their second or third year. All members belong to a particular senior high school and teach in that school. Miyazaki Prefecture does not belong to this program.
2. The program name was changed to 'English Teaching Assistantship in Japan.' But I will continue to use the now familiar name 'MEF.'

Information about the MEF program comes from the following sources (when necessary, I will use the abbreviated forms):

- (Mombusho, 1985): 'Operation Plan for the MEF Program in 1985' (Mombusho publication)
- (Wada, 1985): Wada Minoru, 'English Education and the Mombusho English Fellow' (handout at MEF's orientation meeting in Tokyo, June 26, 1985)
- (Wada, 1986): Wada Minoru, 'Eigo no Gakushū-Shidō ni okeru Kadai — Eigo Shidō-shuji Jōshū nado no Katsuyō ni tsuite' (Some Problems of English Teaching — the better use of MEFs) (in Mombusho monthly magazine, *Chūto-kyōiku Shiryo* (Materials on Secondary Education), Oct. & Nov., 1985 and Jan. — Mar., 1986)
- (CIEE pamphlet): 'English Teaching Assistantship in Japan'



(CIEE pamphlet for MEF recruiting, 1985)

— (*Mombusho Report*): Mombusho report on the number of MEFs  
(June 20, 1985)

3. The project began in 1969 with four Fulbright Assistants. The number of Assistants in each year is as follows (*Mombusho Report*):

Table 4:

Year	Number	Prefectures
1969	4	Hokkaidō, Chiba, Hyōgo, Kagoshima
1970	4	*Hokkaidō, Chiba, Hyōgo, Ōita
1971	4	Fukui, Yamanashi, Okayama, Nagasaki
1972	5	<i>Fukui, Yamanashi, Kanagawa, Nagasaki, Chiba</i>
1973	4	Miyagi, Fukuoka, <i>Kanagawa, Chiba</i>
1974	7	<i>Miyagi, Fukuoka, Fukui, Toyama, Hiroshima, Tokushima, Nagasaki</i>
1975	5	<i>Toyama, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Kagawa, Nagasaki</i>
1976	6	<i>Toyama, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Kagawa, Kagoshima, Kanagawa</i>

\* The prefectures in italics are those which also had assistants in the previous year.

4. From the answers to one of the questions in the questionnaire (see Appendix I), the variety of their university majors can be determined. Only 3 out of the 34 MEFs who answered the questionnaire were TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) majors. Among the other majors of MEFs in 1985 are (*MQ*, 1986):

— History	— Economics	— Politics
— Fine Arts	— Religion	— Anthropology
— Literature		

5. Information in this part mainly comes from the following sources:

— (*MQ*, 1986): A questionnaire answered by 34 MEFs all over Japan.  
(March, 1986) (Appendix I)

— (*JQ*, 1986): A questionnaire answered by 35 JETs in Miyazaki Prefecture.  
(May, 1986) (Appendix II)

— (*MEF Booklet*): A booklet written by former MEFs for the benefit of new MEFs.

— Interviews with some MEFs in 1985 (especially Amy Snyder and Karin Nilsson of Miyazaki Prefecture).

— (*Fukuda*, 1979): Fukuda Shōhachi, *Hanasenai Eigo-Kyoshi* (The English teachers who can't speak English), (SIMUL Press Inc., 1975)

— (*Wada*, 1985): Wada Minoru, 'English Education and the Mombusho English Fellow'  
(handout at MEF's orientation meeting in Tokyo, June 26, 1985)

6. I plan to discuss team-teaching in detail in a subsequent paper.

7. You may find the following book useful for classroom English: Glyn S. Hughs, *A Handbook of Classroom English*, (Oxford Univ. Press, 1982)

(Sept. 30, 1986)

APPENDIX I: *Questionnaire given to MEFs all over Japan (March, 1986)*

## I. About yourself:

- I work for (                    ) (city/prefecture).
- This is my (first/second/third) year.
- I visit (junior/senior) high schools.
- I (have/don't have) a base school.
- My major at university was (                    ).

## II. School Visits:

- How many schools do you visit regularly?
- How often do you visit a certain school? (eg. once or twice a week)
- Do you visit the same classes regularly?
- How often do you teach a certain class?
- How long do you teach at one school? (eg. a series of X lessons)
- How many classes do you teach at one school?
- How many lessons do you have a day?
- How flexible is your schedule?
- Do you have any contact in advance with the teachers of the school you are going to visit?
- How do you contact the teachers before you visit?  
(eg. telephone/letters/in person, etc.)
- What do you discuss in advance with the teachers about your schedule? (eg. times/number of classes/activities. etc.)
- Do you have any obligation after your school visits? (eg. reports to ETC/letters to the teachers, etc.)

## III. Classes:

- When you teach a class all by yourself, what is your typical plan? (time-division/grouping/topics/materials/games, etc.)
- When you teach a class with a Japanese teacher, what is your role?
- What kind of problems do you have?

## V. Discussions with Japanese teachers:

- Do you usually discuss with the teachers afterwards?
- How many times have you helped with in-service training?
- If you use discussion groups in in-service training, what kind of topics are most popular?
- What would you like to discuss with Japanese English teachers?

APPENDIX II: *Questionnaire given to JETs in Miyazaki Prefecture (May, 1986)*

1. 私の学校は { 中学校 }  
{ 普通 } 高校 } です。  
{ 実業 }
2. MEFの招へいについて：
  - a. 昨年度（昭和60年度），あなた（の学校）は何回，MEFを招へいしましたか？
  - b. MEFの招へいは容易ですか？招へいがむずかしい理由は？
3. MEFが学校を訪問する場合：
  - a. 事前の打ち合わせは行ないますか？
  - b. 「行なう」場合，どういう形で行ないますか？  
（電話／手紙／事前に会う／その他）
  - c. 打ち合せの主な内容は何ですか？
  - d. 1回の訪問に対して何時間の授業を依頼しますか？
  - e. 訪問を依頼するクラスの数はいくつですか？
4. 授業について：
  - a. MEFに授業をほとんどすべてまかせることがありますか？
  - b. MEFの訪問に際し，生徒達に特別に準備させますか？  
「はい」の場合，どういうもの（こと）を準備させますか？
  - c. MEFと Team-teaching をする時，どんな手順で進めますか？
  - d. Team-teaching を行う際の問題点があったらお書き下さい。
5. 研修について：
  - a. 授業のあと，MEFとミニ・研修をもつことがありますか？
  - b. ミニ・研修の内容はどういうものですか？
  - c. MEFが講師をつとめる研修に参加したことがありますか？
  - d. 研修の中身はどういうものでしたか？（特にMEFの役割）
6. あなたが Team-teaching をする場合（又は，するとしたら），Native Speaker に期待するものは  
どういうことですか？
7. その他，ご意見，ご希望など何でもけっこうです。