

The Effects of Visualization Activities: Using Children's Literature in University EFL Reading Classes

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Introduction

Until the educational reforms initiated by the Japanese Ministry of Education¹⁾ in 1991, English teaching in Japanese universities had been extensively criticized for its serious communicative and methodological deficiencies. Under such criticisms, traditional language teaching, based largely on the reading and translation of literary texts, became something of a symbol of the ineffective aspects of English language education in Japan. Many, including academics, complained that language teaching without any pedagogical efforts failed to enable students to acquire practical English or good English communicative abilities so that they could come to play a more active role in the global community. This complaint seems to be one of the main arguments against using literature in language classes: i.e. the study of literature will contribute little to ESL students' academic and/or occupational goal of achieving linguistic proficiency (McKay, 1982: 529; Spack, 1985: 704). As a result, literature, which used to be a dominant part of language study, disappeared from most of the

1) Currently known as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

syllabuses of English classes in Japanese universities²⁾. It can be said that this is a matter of common knowledge among almost all university language teachers. However, it has been over twenty years since the reforms were enacted, and this drastic shift does not seem to be known to university students these days³⁾. Moreover, during roughly the last ten years, the necessity and utility of literary works as EFL material have come under the spotlight again in Japan. In this paper, I would like to begin by reviewing briefly some of the previous studies concerned with the integration of literature into language teaching/learning, and then, having done so, I will consider what kinds of literary texts would be suitable for my students. Furthermore, I will make reference to discussions regarding the importance of “visualization” when reading texts. Finally, I will mention the effects of activities through which I encouraged my students to create mental images in their English classes, thereby making the point that it is important for EFL learners to be conscious of the process of “visualization” while reading in English.

1. 1 The Reassessment of Literature in Language Teaching/Learning

Paran (2006: 1) begins his edited book, *Literature in Language Teaching*

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- 2) Qiping & Shubo (2002: 317) reports on a similar situation in Chinese universities: “The past two decades in China have heard ever-increasing outcries for making English courses ‘more pragmatic’, a policy which threatens to marginalize and even banish literature.”
 - 3) I conducted a questionnaire survey in April 2012. It was undertaken with 163 students who were majoring in economics at a Japanese private university. I asked them the question: “For many years, there has been a tendency that literary works should be avoided as language teaching material. What do you think about this opinion?” Only two respondents showed their assent to this idea, and some students added the comment: “I don’t understand why there has been such a tendency,” or “I have never heard about that.” It seemed that many of them were not familiar with the dispute—which used to be rather controversial regarding the irrelevance of literature as EFL material.

and Learning, by reviewing the transitional position of literature in language teaching:

The received wisdom is that literature, once the mainstay of language teaching, being both its purpose and one of its main tools, was relegated to a marginal role with the advent of communicative language teaching in the 1970s. By the 1980s it had all but been “purged from the programme,” as Widdowson (1985, p.180) has put it. But then, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, glimmers of hope appeared.

Many other researchers have pointed out the reassessment of literature in language education which has occurred since the mid to late 1980s⁴. Hess (2006: 27) states that the “return of literature as a rich and worthwhile source for language study has been observed and appreciated over the last 20 years by the ESL/EFL community.” He also mentioned the fact that in 1990, the *ELT Journal* published an issue in which all the articles focused on the teaching of literature. In fact, at that time, Horowitz (1990: 161) wrote, referring to Gajdusek (1988): “Although one advocate of the use of literature in ESL classes recently claimed that literature is now ‘largely neglected’ [. . .], other evidence indicates that interest in its use is now greater than ever.” Furthermore, Hall (1996: 1) has noted, quoting Hirvela (1996), that “the struggle to establish the utility of literary texts in the language classroom is now largely won in mainstream ELT classrooms.”

English language teachers in Japan, myself included, also experienced this

4) Carter (2007: 6) indicates a slightly earlier time as the beginning period of a resurgence of literature: “in the 1970s and 1980s the growth of communicative language teaching methods led to a reconsideration of the place of literature in the language classroom.”

kind of worldwide shift, but, in my experience, each stage of the transition in Japan has lagged behind the prevailing view by around ten years. Then, the trend toward a resurgence of literature in EFL education should have been growing in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Japan. Indeed, as mentioned above, it has been pointed out in recent years that literary works should be utilized for English education. For instance, *The English Teachers' Magazine* issued a special edition about "Literature for English Language Education!" in October 2004, and the 81st annual general meeting of the English Literary Society of Japan held a symposium entitled "How to utilize English Literature for English Language Education" in May 2009⁵⁾. In addition, oral presentations and research articles on the topic of "how to use literary texts for EFL classes" have occasionally appeared in academic meeting programs and journals. However, it is hard to say that such a discussion is mainstream in research on English language teaching in Japan. When compared with many other pedagogical issues, including those on how to introduce ICT into language classes, arguments as to how and why we should utilize literary texts for EFL classes are very few in number and insufficient. Here it is noteworthy that in 1991 Stern states that "literature still tends to be taught in the traditional way in most non-English-speaking countries" without any "clear-cut objectives defining the role of literature in ESL/EFL" (330). She continues: "In ESL situations, instructors would like to enhance their teaching of literature with new approaches and techniques, but lack the resources to do so, and many more instructors would like to include literature, but lack the background and training" (330). For the past two decades, considerable methodological efforts have been made

5) In July of the same year, another symposium, "Possibilities of literary works as teaching materials in English education," was conducted by the Study Group for Literature in Language Education in JACET Kansai Chapter.

to improve English classes in Japanese universities. Nevertheless, as far as the use of literature is concerned, the current state does not seem to be far removed from the above observation made by Stern over twenty years ago.

Moreover, Paran (2006: 1) suggests that the recovery of interest in literature for language teaching/learning “may not have continued far beyond the mid-1990s.” He provides evidence of this as follows: “Whereas in the 1980s there were numerous articles on using literature in the language classroom in *TESOL Quarterly*, there were very few in the 1990s, and there have been none in the new millennium” (1)⁶. Additionally, Paran points out the “relative absence” of literature from methodology textbooks and training courses in the present century (2). Considering the aforementioned time-lag from the worldwide movement, the reassessment of literature in Japan may also fail to become a sustained trend into the 2010s, and, in order to prevent it from losing momentum, productive discussions as to how and why we should integrate literary texts into language classes are necessary in the EFL teaching field.

1.2 Why Use Literary Texts in the Language Classroom?

Collie and Slater (1987: 3) neatly sum up their answers to the following question: “Why should a language teacher use literary texts with classes?”

One of the main reasons might be that literature offers a bountiful and extremely varied body of written material which is ‘important’ in the sense that it says something about fundamental human issues, and which is enduring rather than ephemeral.

6) Kramsch & Kramsch (2000: 553), however, assert: “At the present time, although the study and the teaching of literature are virtually absent from the *MLJ*, ‘literariness’ in language acquisition research is far from dead.”

They continue: “a literary work can transcend both time and culture to speak directly to a reader in another country or a different period of history” as “authentic material.” Moreover, they state that literature helps expand the intermediate or advanced learner’s language awareness and it “can be helpful in the language learning process because of the personal involvement it fosters in readers” (5). Thus, especially since around the late 1980s, both ELT researchers and teachers have stated the utility of literary texts in the language classroom, and there is much repetition and overlap between the main points which have been listed by them (McKay, 1982: 531; Stern, 1991: 328; Lazar, 1993: 14-20; Ur, 1996: 201; Maley, 2001: 182; Hall, 2005: 48; Butler, 2006: 22).

The advantages of incorporating literature can roughly be categorized into three groups: a motivating power, a good stimulus for language acquisition/awareness, and general educational value. First, it has been pointed out that literary texts are more enjoyable and pleasurable to read than “the pseudo-narratives frequently found in the course books” (Lazar, 1993: 15). The fact should be recognized that “classroom uses of literature put off at least as many students as they encourage” (Hall 2005: 51-2), but, at the same time, authentic texts have the potential to motivate learners to want to read, thereby helping them develop the habit of reading both in and out of class (Stern, 1991: 328). Secondly, good-quality and beautifully written literary texts can encourage students’ language acquisition and make learners, especially advanced ones, aware of style and vocabulary. Moreover, in addition to these motivational effects and linguistic benefits, the use of literature in a classroom has the potential to add “a wider educational function” to language teaching, as “it can help to stimulate the imagination of our students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness” (Lazar, 1993: 19). Among these advantages, the primary reason why I planned to use literary texts in

my teaching context is that they are likely to encourage students' imagination during the process of reading. Maley (2001: 182), when reviewing the previous studies on a rationale for integrating literature in language teaching, describes literary texts as "representational texts, which require the reader to re-create in his or her own terms the imaginative world of the text." As will be discussed later, I would like to encourage my students to develop their image-creating skills through using the stimulating quality of literature, thereby helping them see their own images in the mind while reading the text in English.

2.1 Suitable Literary Texts for My Target Learners

Collie and Slater (1987: 6) describe an ideal process when students are reading a novel or short story. Once they are drawn into the book, each word or phrase on the page becomes less important:

Pinpointing what individual words or phrases may mean becomes less important than pursuing the development of the story. The reader is eager to find out what happens as events unfold; he or she feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. The language becomes 'transparent' — the fiction summons the whole person into its own world.

They note that "this can happen, and can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process," although they admit it is necessary that the reader should be "well-motivated" and the choice of a literary text is crucial in order to facilitate this "creative relationship" between the reader and the text (6). However, I feel that this kind of ideal state of reading, in which "the

language becomes transparent,” would be almost impossible for most of my target students to attain. Hence, in order to help them come close to this ultimate goal, as has often been argued, it is essential to consider what kinds of literary works are suitable for their EFL reading classes. I quite agree with Collie and Slater’s observation that teachers should “choose a work that is not too much above the students’ normal reading proficiency” (6). In short, it is necessary to judge the suitability of literary texts for students’ linguistic levels and to take into account their preferences when making the choice of teaching materials for English reading classes.

For this reason, I conduct a questionnaire survey on my target learners at the beginning of every academic year. In this paper I will mainly show the results of the questionnaire held in April 2010 (See Appendix A). The survey was undertaken with 195 students majoring in economics at a Japanese private university. Almost all of the students were freshmen and sophomores, and their TOEIC-IP scores varied considerably from 160 to 640. As their average score falls below 400, their English abilities, both in reading and listening, are not particularly high. Here I would like to focus attention on the answers to the first question in the survey: “What genre of text would you like to read in your English classes?” The students gave one or two answers to the question, and 83 respondents chose “current newspaper articles” and “film scripts or novelized works.” This confirmed my pre-questionnaire expectations and clearly indicates the students’ awareness of the necessity for current English and their affinity for films or visual-related materials. However, somewhat surprisingly, “novels” ranked as the number one choice across the board as indicated in Figure 1⁷. Moreover, 60.3 percent of the students answered “motivated” or

7) In the questionnaire survey conducted in April 2012, which is already mentioned in footnote 3, I asked 163 university freshmen the same question with the same 10 choices. As for

“very motivated” to the second question: “Would you feel motivated if the syllabus informed you that novels would be used as your textbook for a reading class?” These results show the students’ desire to try reading novels in English, although their English abilities are lacking.

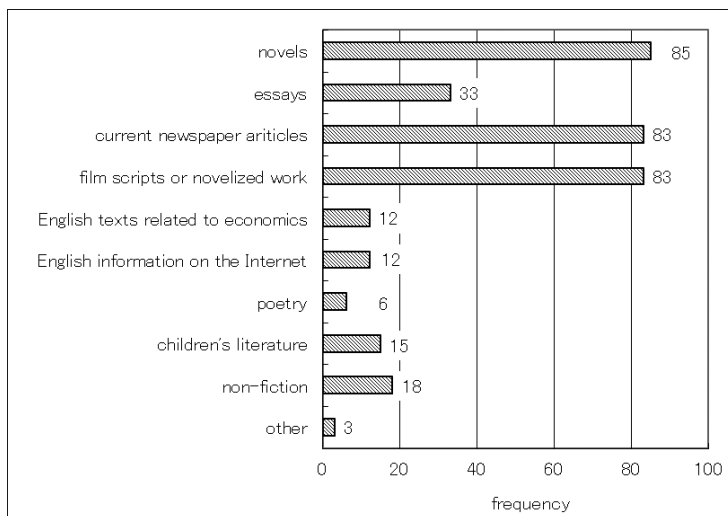


Figure1 Survey Results from the Question:
“What genre of text would you like to read in your English classes?”

Considering the above, I am confronted with an apparent contradiction: my students express their inclination for reading novels, but they lack adequate English abilities. I would like to propose that one of the solutions to the problem is to use children’s literature. From previous questionnaires, or from conversations with my target learners, it became apparent to me that they have a preference

the top three answers given, this recent survey showed similar findings with the 2010 questionnaire. Although “film scripts or novelized works” was the first choice among 81 students, “novels” was a close second with 76 respondents. “Current newspaper articles,” which ranked in third place, was chosen by 56 students.

for “relatively short” and “enjoyable” novels or stories to incomprehensible verses or long intimidating texts. They also showed their liking for children’s literature, especially, recently-cinematized works, although in the results of the above survey only 15 respondents chose children’s literature⁸⁾. Children’s literature could be a useful resource for university learners who, in particular, are reluctant to read in English compulsory classes, as texts for children are, in general, characterized by their relatively simple sentence structure, clear plot and enjoyable story.

2.2 Why Use Children’s Literature in My Teaching Context?

Rönnqvist and Sell (1994: 125-6) point out that it is better to use real teenager-orientated books than to read simplified texts of well-known classics⁹⁾, as they are “relevant to the life experience, thoughts, emotions, and dreams of young people.” In addition, they refer to the fact that, in some cases, abridged or simplified classics miss the flavour of the original work, thereby rendering them too dry and unstimulating for learners¹⁰⁾. Therefore, EFL classes require “unshortened texts to which nothing has been done to reduce the pleasure of reading” (126). It follows that an appropriate choice from among children’s literature can also provide EFL learners with the better suited texts which Rönnqvist and Sell suggested above.

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- 8) The aforementioned 2012 questionnaire asked students: “How would you feel if the syllabus informed you that children’s literature would be used as your textbook for a reading class?” 79 percent of the students answered “Would like to read” or “Would like to read very much.”
- 9) McKay (1982: 532) also suggests that one alternative to using simplified versions is to select texts from young adult literature.
- 10) Ur (1996: 202), likewise, states that simplified versions, which are commonly used in the classroom, tend to be of a “watered-down” quality.

Furthermore, it can be said that works for children are beneficial for “extensive reading,” the method which I have long endeavoured to incorporate into my compulsory EFL reading classes, especially for undergraduate students who lack the motivation to read on their own volition. Regarding the choice of material for extensive reading, Day and Bamford (2004: 205) suggest that “carefully chosen children’s literature” is one possibility for language learners at low levels of ability. They also write that children’s literature should not be neglected as a valuable resource: “The books, many of a quality that appeals to children and adults alike, can add variety to any extensive reading library” (1998: 98).

More importantly, McNicholls (2006: 73) discusses the potential for exploiting children’s literature as a stimulus for learners’ productive imagination:

[Literature] facilitates not only access to the reproductive imagination that is a sine qua non condition for any society but also access to the creative imagination that is part of the heritage of the whole human race.

He emphasizes the significance of incorporating these aspects of imagination and creativity into EFL teaching programs. This idea follows in line with my concept of teaching which aims toward the development of students’ creative visualization skills in the EFL reading classroom.

3.1 The Importance of Visualization while Reading Texts

As previously mentioned, most university students are generally fascinated by films, particularly, ones which have recently been released in the cinema. As contrasted with these films, written works cannot show characters and

scenes to their readers in a visually-apparent way. However, mental images produced in the process of reading can often be lasting and special for each reader in spite of their intangibility. Chatman (1978: 118), who analyzed narrative structure in fiction and film, mentioned “the annoyance of enforced visualization of well-known characters in films.” Arnold (1999: 260) also argues about “mental images”:

If, after seeing a film, we comment that the book is better, it may in part be due to the greater scope of the written version, but it is also very likely going to be because as we read the novel, we form mental images that satisfy us much more than the images we see on the screen.

Moreover, A. S. Byatt, an English novelist, states: “Writers rely on the endlessly varying visual images of individual readers and on the constructive visualising work those readers do.” She continues: “This is the reason, I think, why I at least am very distressed to find publishers using photographs of real, identifiable people to represent my characters on the covers of novels. It limits the readers’ imaginations” (2002: 2). With the proliferation of visual media such as films or online images, it becomes essential to encourage EFL university learners, especially those who lack the motivation to read, to create these kinds of mental images while reading in English. For Arnold (1999: 262) maintains that “our natural ability to use mental images and to develop our imagination greatly declines with age.” Zeigler and Johns (2004: xx-xxi) also notes:

Unlike some strategies, visualization is not necessarily easier for older students who may not have been taught to use it in the earlier grades. [. . .] [S]ome high school students do not even realize that the strategy exists and that it can help them to be better readers.

Tomlinson, who emphasized the significance of visualization for second language reading (See 1996; 1998a; 1998b; 2001), points out that most L2 (second language) readers do not use the strategy of visualization commonly found among L1 (first language) readers (1996: 256). Tomlinson conducted a survey on 562 students in Japanese universities, and he reports that most of the students did not mention “visualization” when asked to think of what processes they used while reading a text. Tomlinson (1996: 256) further writes:

For example, in one experiment only seven out of 41 students reported any visualisation when they were asked to say what they had done in order to try to understand and remember a poem [. . .]. The main strategies reported by the non-visualisers were ‘looking up difficult words’, ‘trying to translate the poem’, ‘reading the poem over and over again’, ‘trying to memorise the poem’, and ‘giving up’.

Tomlinson and Avila (2007: 64) briefly review the previous research findings regarding visual imaging in L2 learning, and they comment that “L2 learners typically do not make adequate or effective use of visual imaging until they reach an advanced level of L2 proficiency.”

In the questionnaire survey previously described, I asked the students several questions about “visualization” (See Appendix A, Q.3-Q.9). In Q.3, I asked them whether they create visual images of scenes and characters in their mind (“visualize”) while reading Japanese texts such as novels or short stories. In answer to the question, as indicated in Figure 2, 85.1 percent of the respondents chose “often” or “always.” However, when the students were asked the same question in regard to visualizing while reading English texts (Q.4), 43.8 percent of them answered “often” or “always” (See Figure 3). This

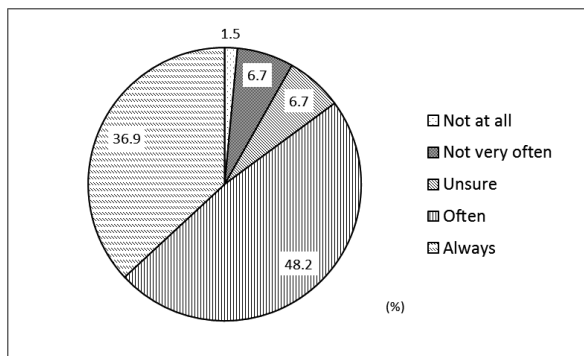


Figure2 Survey Results from the Question: “Do you create visual images of scenes and characters in your mind (‘visualize’) while reading Japanese texts such as novels or short stories?”

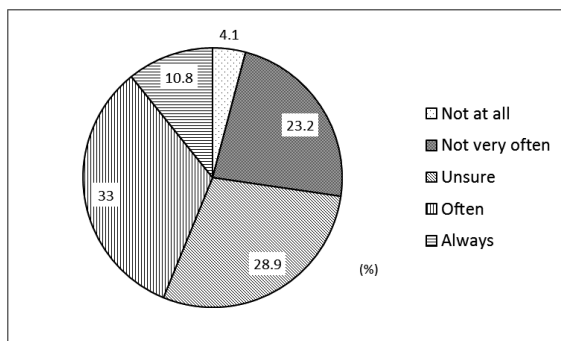


Figure3 Survey Results from the Question: “Do you create visual images of scenes and characters in your mind (‘visualize’) while reading English texts such as novels or short stories?”

showed a significant decline of almost half, which confirmed the fact that more than half of my target learners have difficulty in visualizing or, rather, they are not conscious of the mental process of visualization when reading in English. The fifth question of the survey was about whether the respondents have ever been conscious of such a process of “visualization” while reading in English, and 75.3 percent of them answered “No.” Furthermore, I asked

the students: "Have you ever been encouraged or advised to 'visualize' while reading in your English classes?" In response, an overwhelming 90.2 percent of them answered "No."

It has been pointed out that visualization can be a useful strategy for ESL or EFL learners to enhance their reading ability. For instance, Tomlinson (1996: 258) notes that L2 readers who were taught or encouraged to visualize showed improvement in their reading competence and confidence. In addition, according to Tomlinson (1998b: 270), developing an L2 reader's ability to visualize enables them to become more positively engaged with the text and more able to comprehend and retain what is read. Ghazanfari (2009: 16), as well, reports that "visualization practices" by EFL learners before, whilst, and after reading literary texts (short stories) were proven effective in enhancing their reading comprehension capability and improving their recall of the texts.

3.2 Focused Visualization in My Reading Classes

From the beginning of April to the end of December in 2010, I incorporated visualization activities into my three compulsory English classes over the course of two semesters. Each class size was approximately thirty and, as described in Appendix B and C, almost all of the students were sophomores majoring in economics at a Japanese private university. Their TOEIC-IP scores varied greatly, and the average score was slightly over 400. As shown in the results of the questionnaire, 93.9 percent of the students had never been encouraged or advised to visualize while reading in their English classes (See Appendix B, Q.6). We had one ninety-minute class per week, or twenty eight classes during the two semesters of the academic year. I used the latter thirty to forty minutes of each class for visualization activities. In all three classes, I

instructed my students to do the same assignments and activities focused on visual imaging. The reading material selected for the activities was *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl.

Many literary works, including some masterpieces for children, have been successively cinematized in recent years. This is often regarded as an advantage to integrating literary texts into language teaching because cinematized works can be used as motivating teaching aids in classes. However, as Byatt suggests above, visual images can sometimes be an impediment, especially when the primary aim is to enhance students' imaginative skills. Some of the students had already watched the film version of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and some of those who had difficulty in following the story were eager to watch it in order to avoid struggling through the original text. Therefore I advised them not to watch it and told them that the film version is quite different from the original work.

A main tactic which I implemented in my teaching plan was “post-reading drawing,” one of the activities which Tomlinson (1996: 258-260) suggests to improve learners' visualization skills. Tomlinson (1996: 259) observes: “Post-reading drawing helped students to read visually and interactively, provided that they were told what they were going to be asked to draw prior to reading the text.” In addition to helping EFL learners develop their image-creating skills, using this method enabled me to evaluate the students' comprehension of the text without having them translate it into Japanese. Ubukawa and Ishida (2003: 67) point out that the activity of drawing pictures is also helpful for students themselves to “make sure if they really understand what they have read.”

As a weekly assignment, I requested my students to read several pages of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* while trying to imagine the characters, the settings and the scenes described in the story in their minds. In class, a

task sheet was distributed and the students were encouraged to draw pictures of the characters or scenes which I selected from the pages they had been told to read. Then, circulating around the classroom, I discussed the pictures drawn with each of the students, or occasionally I asked them to compare their drawings in pairs. The class activities sometimes included just visualizing while I, or the students themselves, read sentences from the text aloud. I not only encouraged the students to do the visualization assignments and activities week by week, but I also tried to make them aware of the significance of creating images in their minds as a way of enhancing their reading abilities.

3.3 The Effects of Visualization Activities

In the survey at the beginning of April 2010, only 22 percent of the students answered “Yes” to the question about whether they have ever been conscious of a process of “visualization” while reading in English (See Appendix B, Q.5). Nine months later, I conducted a questionnaire survey again on 94 students who attended my English classes at the end of December 2010 (See Appendix C). I asked the following: “You have been encouraged repeatedly to create mental images in and out of the class. Have you become conscious of the process of ‘visualization’ while reading in English?” As shown in Figure 4, 77.7 percent of the students answered “Often” or “Always.” This showed a significant percentage increase over the course of two semesters. Furthermore, I asked the second question to the respondents whose answer was “Often” or “Always” to the above question: “How much do you think your reading abilities have been enhanced by becoming conscious of the process of ‘visualization’ or by making it a habit to ‘visualize’ while reading in English?” As many as 80.8 percent of them answered “Much” or “Very Much” (See Figure 5). Some

students made favourable comments on the visualization assignments in the section for free description, for example: “Image-creating enabled me to enjoy reading more than before,” or “I think that I could improve the speed of my reading in English,” or “I noticed that I retained what I had read by forming a picture of the story in my mind, even if I didn’t reread the text in class.”

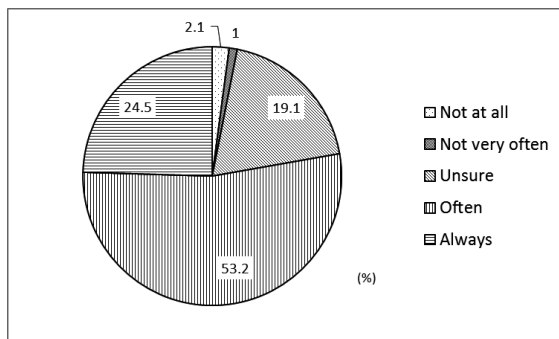


Figure4 Survey Results from the Question: “You have been encouraged repeatedly to create mental images in and out of the class. Have you become conscious of the process of ‘visualization’ while reading in English?”

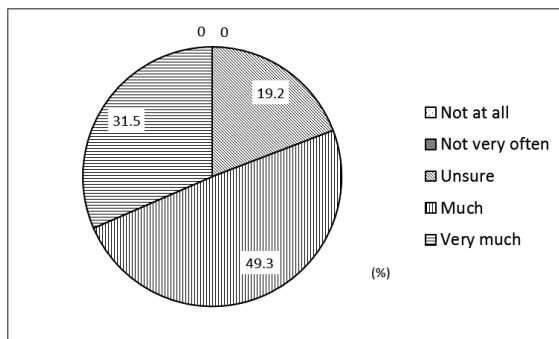


Figure5 Survey Results from the Question: “How much do you think your reading abilities have been enhanced by becoming conscious of the process of ‘visualization’ or by making it a habit to ‘visualize’ while reading in English?”

Thus, through these activities, many students became conscious of the process of visualization while reading in English, and most of those students realized that their reading abilities were improved. It can be said that visualization activities did contribute to my pedagogical intention, although I think that I should have introduced a more objective measuring method in order to better evaluate the effects of class activities focused on visualization.

Conclusion

Advanced EFL learners who have a habit of reading English texts voluntarily produce their own mental images spontaneously without being instructed to do so. Therefore, first and foremost, it is vital to judge the level of target learners' language abilities precisely and to confirm the necessity of introducing visualization activities in classes. Then, when deemed necessary, language instructors should guide students to become conscious of the process of visualization as an effective strategy for improving their reading ability. This will help them come closer to a level where they can take pleasure in reading literary and non-literary texts in English on their own volition.

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Appendix A

Results of a Survey on Students' Attitudes toward "Visualization" while Reading in English

This survey was conducted in order to try to understand what students think about integrating literature into English reading classes and how well they are conscious of the process of "visualization" while reading in English. It was conducted at the beginning of April 2010. The respondents were 195 Japanese private university students majoring in economics. The number of female students was 43 and the number of male students was 152. Almost all of the students were freshmen and sophomores. Their TOEIC-IP scores varied considerably from 160 to 640 and the average score was 397.9 (n=113). The results are as follows:

Q.1 What genre of text would you like to read in your English classes? Choose the two most suitable alternatives.

1. novels 2. essays on different cultures and societies 3. current newspaper articles 4. film scripts or novelized works 5. English texts related to economics 6. English information on the Internet 7. poetry 8. children's literature 9. non-fiction 10. other

(n=195)

novels	essays	current newspaper articles	film scripts or novelized works	English texts related to economics	English information on the Internet	poetry	children's literature	non-fiction	other
85	33	83	83	12	12	6	15	18	3

As for the questions below (Q.2-Q.9), choose the most suitable alternative.

Q.2 Would you feel motivated if the syllabus informed you that novels would be used as your textbook for a reading class?

(n=194)

Not at all motivated	Not so motivated	Unsure	Motivated	Very motivated
4	19	54	78	39

Q.3 Do you create visual images of scenes and characters in your mind (“visualize”) while reading Japanese texts such as novels or short stories?

(n=195)

Not at all	Not very often	Unsure	Often	Always
3	13	13	94	72

Q.4 Do you create visual images of scenes and characters in your mind (“visualize”) while reading English texts such as novels or short stories?

(n=194)

Not at all	Not very often	Unsure	Often	Always
8	45	56	64	21

Q.5 Have you ever been conscious of such a process of “visualization” while reading in English?

(n=194)

Yes	No
48	146

Q.6 Have you ever been encouraged or advised to “visualize” while reading in your English classes?

(n=194)

Yes	No
19	175

Q.7 Have you ever felt disappointed because you read the original text and then the visual images in the cinematized work were different from the mental images you had created?

(1) When you read the original text in Japanese

(n=194)

Yes	No	I have never read the original text upon which the movie is based
139	24	31

(2) When you read the original text in English

(n=194)

Yes	No	I have never read the original text upon which the movie is based
16	42	136

Q.8 It is said that visual aids, such as illustrations or films, could destroy your own ability to form visual images in your mind or might even damage your imaginative skills. What do you think about this opinion?

(n=193)

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Unsure	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
34	58	90	10	1

Q.9 Some researchers have pointed out that “visualization” is a significant strategy in order to enhance reading abilities of ESL/EFL learners. What do you think about this opinion?

(n=194)

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Unsure	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
2	5	63	99	25

Q.10 What kind of strategies do you usually try to use in order to improve your reading comprehension in English? Describe freely below.

Appendix B

Results of the Survey on My Students’ Attitudes toward “Visualization” while Reading in English

The seven questions below are picked out from Appendix A. The respondents, 82 Japanese university students, are a portion of the total respondents in Appendix A. They were students in my compulsory English classes*. The number of female students was 17 and the number of male students was 65. Almost all of the students were sophomores. Their TOEIC-IP scores varied considerably from 200 to 640 and the average score was 404.03 (n=80). The reason why I show only their answers is to compare them with the answers in Appendix C.

(*The number of the respondents is fewer than the number of the students registered in my classes because some were absent and others had not yet registered on the first day of the spring semester.)

The results are as follows:

Q.3 Do you create visual images of scenes and characters in your mind (“visualize”) while reading Japanese texts such as novels or short stories?

(n=82)

Not at all	Not very often	Unsure	Often	Always
1	5	6	41	29

Q.4 Do you create visual images of scenes and characters in your mind (“visualize”) while reading English texts such as novels or short stories?

(n=82)

Not at all	Not very often	Not sure	Often	Always
4	19	27	24	8

Q.5 Have you ever been conscious of such a process of “visualization” while reading in English?

(n=82)

Yes	No
18	64

Q.6 Have you ever been encouraged or advised to “visualize” while reading in your English classes?

(n=82)

Yes	No
5	77

Q.7 Have you ever felt disappointed because you read the original text and then the visual images in the cinematized work were different from the mental images you had created?

(1) When you read the original text in Japanese

(n=82)

Yes	No	I have never read the original text upon which the movie is based
63	6	13

(2) When you read the original text in English

(n=82)

Yes	No	I have never read the original text upon which the movie is based
10	17	55

Q.8 It is said that visual aids, such as illustrations or films, could destroy your own ability to form visual images in your mind or might even damage your imaginative skills. What do you think about this opinion?

(n=82)

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Unsure	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
13	28	34	6	1

Q.9 Some researchers have pointed out that “visualization” is a significant strategy in order to enhance reading abilities of ESL/EFL learners. What do you think about this opinion?

(n=82)

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Unsure	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
2	0	21	50	9

Appendix C

Results of a Survey on My Students' Consciousness about "Visualization" while Reading in English

This survey was conducted in order to try to understand how my students had become conscious of the process of "visualization" while reading in English. It was conducted at the end of December 2010. The students had been encouraged repeatedly to do some activities focused on "visualization" in my English classes throughout two semesters: from the beginning of April to the middle of July and from the end of September to the end of December 2010. The respondents were 94 Japanese university students majoring in economics. They were the same as the respondents shown in Appendix B, although some additional students had registered in the autumn semester. The number of female students was 18 and the number of male students was 76. Almost all of the students were sophomores. Their TOEIC-IP scores varied considerably from 200 to 645 and the average score was 407.56 (n=81).

The results are as follows:

Choose the most suitable alternative.

Q.1 You have been encouraged repeatedly to create mental images in and out of the class. Have you become conscious of the process of "visualization" while reading in English?

(n=94)

Not at all	Not very often	Unsure	Often	Always
2	1	18	50	23

(Only to the respondents whose answer is “Often” or “Always” to the question above.)

Q.2 How much do you think your reading abilities have been enhanced by becoming conscious of the process of “visualization” or by making it a habit to “visualize” while reading in English?

(n=73)

Not at all	Not very much	Unsure	Much	Very much
0	0	14	36	23